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TWO

LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO THE

Rev. ALEXANDER CARSON.

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO VINDICATE PRESBYTERIANISM FROM THE ASPERSIONS CAST UPON IT.

By AND. STEVENSON.

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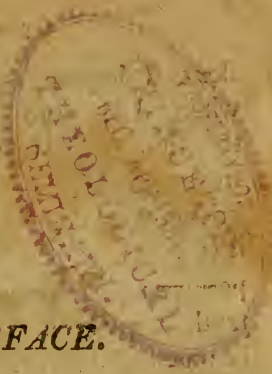

THE PREFACE.

It has been the lot of those who love the cause of religion, in almost every age, to contend not only with more open foes, but with professed, and in some respects with real friends; such is my situation. The man whom I oppose is, I believe, not only sound in the doctrines of faith, but one who probably has given as great an evidence of being denied to the profits and honours of the world, as any in our day. Yet as Paul withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed, so ought we to oppose even the most godly, if they either deviate from, or innovate in divine institutions. Yet while I oppose I love; and while I reason I reverence and esteem; and, were I capable, I would make a distinction between weakening errors and soul-ruining heresies, or between weakness and wickedness. The former of which

alone I impute to my pious opposer; but when I impute weakness of opinion to the man, I am far from imputing weakness of talents or learning to him. I know that the disproportion between us is so great, and he is so inspeakably my superior, that I am afraid all the weight of truth on my side, will in this feeble attempt be unable to counterbalance; nor am I so weak as to think myself a fit supporter of the cause of Presbyterianism. It might excite the just indignation of all the genuine sons of Presbytery to see one so inadequate entering the lists with such a boasted champion. They might charge me with arrogance and haughtiness, and that I had come in my pride to see the battle. It is true, I come not armed with the shield and buckler of learning and critical skill. I am not fenced with the spear of logical knowledge, by which I might pierce the arguments of my opposer. But I come in the simple array of an unlettered peasant, and I approach, I hope, in the name of the Lord, to meet one, who, however esteemed in other respects, I think in this instance, hath "Defied the armies of the living God."

When Mr. Carson's publication first came into my hands, the uneasiness it produced in

my mind cannot easily be described; I had flattered myself, that the Presbyterian system was not only founded on the word of God, but that nothing substantial could be objected against it. But here I saw the foundation seemingly overturned. And a new system apparently fair, strong, and scriptural, erected on its ruins. The arguments produced appeared so strong, and they were so well supported by scripture, that I began to doubt that all I had ever believed concerning Presbytery was but a "Cunningly devised fable." I thought however that I would examine the point; for though I would think it right to give up a favourite system upon conviction; yet I would think it weakness to do so without thorough investigation. In order to that I examined with renewed attention the attack made upon my system by Mr. Carson; and notwithstanding the plausible appearance of his reasonings, thought that I discovered some inadvertencies, some inconsistencies, and unfair deductions in what he had written; until some of these were cleared out of the way I saw that I could not conscientiously become an Independent. In order that this might be done, that the Author might have an oppor-

tunity of speaking more explicitly, and likely of rectifying what might be my mistake, I wrote and forwarded to him these two letters that I now publish. I had at that time no intention of publishing. I knew that I was very unfit for it. I only expected to obtain satisfaction as to my own doubts upon the subject. I did not get such a satisfactory answer as what I expected, but was referred to a book, that was said to be in the press, in Glasgow, for an answer. Indeed I concluded that the cause of this was, what I knew to be a fact, that I was below Mr. Carson's notice. And as I found it inconvenient for me to go to Glasgow for a solution of my doubts, I examined the matter over again myself. I read the Bible, I endeavoured to look up to him who has promised to guide the lowly, I lost many an hours sleep in thoughtful research. Finally, my doubts were removed, and I became as fully persuaded in the truth of the Presbyterian system as ever I had been. The reasons of my publishing at present are—

First, That if any have been puzzled in the same way that I have been on this subject, they possibly might find some relief from the remarks contained in these letters, and which

were the means of producing relief to my own mind.

Secondly, I understand that by some means or other it came to be known that I had written to Mr. Carson, and it was asserted that I had borrowed my observations upon his production from Mr. Brown's "Defence of Classical Presbytery." I cannot tell who was the propagator, at first, of that report, but I think it little to their credit. It was representing me in a very unfavourable light; for by that means I must have been not only guilty of plagiarism, but of acting the part of an imposter, pretending to have uneasy feelings in my own mind, while I was only transcribing sentiments from another. I would be very sorry to impute any such thing to Mr. Carson. But if he did suspect me in that, it would much weaken my resentment against the clergymen of the Synod of Ulster, respecting a charge which he prefers against them. He alleges that they borrow a number of their sermons from books, and that when they entertain their people with elegant language and fine composition, they are not giving one word of their own, but copying it all from men who were capable to compose in this manner,—such as the Scotch Preach-

er, Logan's Sermons, &c. Now from his relation I thought it had been a fact, and that it was very unbecoming conduct in learned men like them; for what man of taste and spirit would not rather appear in his own clothes tho' homely, than in the robes of another, tho' more elegant? And the richer the dress, and the more above his capacity, the more ridiculous is the wearer, if it be a borrowed one. But if I thought that Mr. Carson had been the relater of this tale concerning me, I would begin to suspect this story of his about the preachers, and to think that he had got a custom of suspecting people for borrowing when they had not done it. For I can, and do solemnly aver, that I never yet saw Brown's "Defence of Classical Presbytery;" nor did I buy or borrow a single book to assist me in writing to my learned friend; my Bible, and the few books that have for many years constituted my little library were my only helps. Any person that reads these letters may discern, that they consist chiefly of objections raised against Mr. Carson, from what I considered to be inconsistency in his reasoning itself; and my principal remarks could never have existed unless Mr. Carson's writing had produced them; so

that if the real origin of my remarks be enquired for, it was no other book than Mr. Carson's that was the cause.

A third reason of my publishing is, from the hope that when my feeble efforts to support the honourable, but despised cause of Presbytery shall be seen, some of the well qualified watchmen on Zion's walls will come forth, and with the pen of the learned, deal destructions to those arguments, shall I say? or *sophisms*, that have been hurled forth as so many battering rams to raze the very foundations of the goodly government of the house of our God. I might detain the reader with apologies of unfitness, but I need not, I am sure the work itself will contain abundant evidence to this purpose. But as I have never received a liberal nor refined education, (as I occupy the humble station of a mechanick in a low sphere of life) if these letters should fall into the hands of any of the learned, I hope they will make every allowance for the inaccuracies that they may discover in them. Those who have spent years in informing their mind with knowledge, cannot easily know what a task it must be for a man to publish, even in my weak manner, who, not to speak of learning and

elegant studies, has not been taught the rules of grammar, is destitute of any adequate knowledge of spelling, except what he acquires by dint of toil in turning the leaves of a dictionary, and who without infringing on his sleep has not time to devote to the subject. Depending upon the indulgence of the learned, fully convinced in my own mind of the goodness of my cause, and trusting that God, whose I think it is, will produce and prosper means for its support, I submit the fruit of my studies on this subject to the public; and if it shall be the means of warning any of the unruly, who rebel against Church order—of strengthening any of the feeble minded—or of confirming any that are wavering, I shall think my feeble efforts abundantly repaid.

ANDREW STEVENSON.

June 1st, 1810

Rev. Sir,

Although unacquainted, I make free to trouble you with a few lines in consequence of a publication of your's, which lately came to my hand. So much zeal for your master, so much love to holiness and self-denial shewed themselves in it, as not only engaged my attention, but drew my affection very much to you. But upon further investigation, I found independent church government not only vindicated, but Presbytery examined, weighed in the balance, and by you found wanting. This for a moment stifled the pleasing sensation; yet your mode of reasoning was so strong, your apostolic precepts and examples so numerous and plain, that at first sight, notwithstanding all my former strict adherence to Presbytery, I was almost constrained to adopt as a principle what Job spoke ironically, "Doubtless you are the people, and wisdom will die with you." Yet notwithstanding all the strength of your arguments. and all the perspicuity with which they are adorned, my dulness of uptaking is such, that I require precept upon precept, I therefore would modestly propose the follow-

ing questions; while under the influence of a docile spirit I prostrate myself at your feet, and subject myself to your tuition as your pupil, knowing that "The priests lip's should keep knowledge, and that I should seek the law at his mouth," hoping that, tho' your system denies the right of appeals to the injured, yet that you will not deny the right of enquiry to the ignorant.

In page 31 you begin your attack by representing Presbyterians as glorying in the 15th of the Acts as their only and alone bulwark, insinuating that they have little else to support their system but what they extract from this passage; but to convince you of the contrary, consult Acts xiii. 1. There is a Presbytery consisting of three members, Simeon, Lucius, and Maneon; these, while sitting in this capacity, are expressly commanded by the Holy Ghost, to set apart two candidates for the ministry, viz. Barnabas and Saul, by ordination, with the imposition of hands. Now if you would refuse this as a second bulwark, might I not be tempted to think that you were afraid that it would not only prove Presbytery, but that Presbyterians from it might play off their artillery against the usurpation of the laity, who in the indepenent church arrogantly grasp at the power of the keys in the act of ordination.

Secondly, What do you think of 1 Tim.

iv. 14. There Timothy is said to have received his office in the same way which Barnabas and Saul did; namely, by imposition of Presbyterial hands (notice that the laity intermeddle not). Now, if you would admit this as a third bulwark, I would, with your leave, place one of your own pieces of ordnance on it, taken from page 61, where you say that "The office which has not a name in scripture, has not an institution in scripture." But here you see that Presbytery, both name and thing, has an existence in scripture. But if it should happen that independency has neither, what damage would you sustain from your own artillery?

Thirdly, If you would admit Acts 6. (where the deacons are ordained) to be at least one of the high towers of Presbytery, might you not from it see the exact sphere, which Divine Wisdom has marked out for ruler and ruled to move in? Might you not from it see the people choosing, and the Presbytery ordaining? Now from this fort might not Presbyterians do great execution against such as deny a popular power about the keys, to the laity in choosing their own church officers on the one side; and on the other, against such as grant them authoritative power to use them in ordination.

In page 65, in order to overturn the idea of Presbytery, and establish the independency of congregations, you assert that the reasons why the church of Jerusalem is always named in the singular, is to shew that it consisted only of one congregation. While I have hitherto thought it was because it was governed by one Presbytery; yet consisted of very many congregations, and my reasons were the following:—

First, On account of the great diversity of language in use among believers in this church. In the name of wonder how could Parthians, Medes, Elamits, dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea Cappadosia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Fgypt, Libya, Cyrene, strangers from Rome, Jews, Cretes, Arabians, &c. I say how could all these hear, pray and praise in the same congregation?

Secondly, On account of their number, which encreased from one hundred and twenty, Acts 1. to three thousand one hundred and twenty, Acts ii. 4. five thousand more are added, Acts iv. 4. and in Acts v. 14. uncounted multitudes are added to this same church. And in Acts vi. it is said "That the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith." And in Acts xxi. James speaks of uncounted thousands

being added to this same church. Permit me here to ask what house is it that could contain all these, for churches were not then built, but they went about from house to house, as you see in Acts ii. 46.

Thirdly, The great number of pastors which resided in this parish prove, either that they preached seldom, and so laboured not in word and doctrine; or else that there were very many congregations; and you know that those (not the laity) met often for acts of government, as in Acts i. to ordain Mathias; and in Acts vi. to ordain deacons; and in Acts xv. to determine about the dispute from Antioch; and in Acts xxi. Paul, James, and all the elders meet in a Presbyterial capacity, before whom Paul is accountable for his faithfulness in the ministry. But I would fain flatter myself, that it was nothing worse than inadvertency, that induced you to quote Acts ii. 44. to prove that all these apostles, elders and people composed but one congregation; because that it is there said that they were altogether with one accord. That the thing was true, when this text was written, none doubts, but was not the church then in her infancy? I think however before the point is proven, that you would require to produce such a text after the 21 chapter.

Moreover, its evident that the church of Ephesus liwewise consisted of very many congregations, although always named in the singular. There Paul continued by the space of two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, Acts xix. 20. Was it not at Ephesus that a great door and effectual was opened to Paul? 1 Cor. xvi. 8. Was it not here that Paul's miracles were known to all the Jews and Greeks that dwelt at Ephesus? Was it not here that such as had curious arts brought their books & burned them? No wonder then that it is said in Acts xix. "So mightily grew the word of the Lord and increased." Now if all this could take place in one single congregation, I would think it a little strange. But as it is evident there were very many congregations, so there were very many pastors, see Acts xx. 17. where Paul at Miletus calls for the elders of Ephesus to meet him, which by the by proves provincial synods. Had this been an ordinary Presbytery, they would, doubtless, have met at home as other Presbyteries; and had it been a national synod or general assembly, they would, doubtless, have met at their usual place, viz. Jerusalem. Therefore, it seems to me that it was neither, but a provincial synod.

Now this eldership alone had divine warrant to exercise the keys, in trying the gifts

and orthodoxy of bishops, and rejecting hirelings, and all without dependence on the laity. Now all this is evident from Rev. ii. 2. where the Presbytery of Ephesus is expressly commanded by the Holy Ghost, for their judicative decision, having tryed them which said they were apostles, and were not, and found them liars. Now if there is any weight in these remarks to prove a Presbyterial church at Jerusalem and Ephesus, I could add a number of a similar kind, to prove the same at Samaria, Galatia, and Rome. But I return to Acts xv.

I once designed not to drop one remark on this chapter, but to have passed on, and evinced that the scriptures abound with proofs for Presbyterian church government besides it. But seeing the bold attack you have made on it, both by stratagem and storm, to make it strike to independency, and you now have proclaimed to the world that it has done so; I will therefore stop to examine the matter; for I have no more fear that it has done this, than I have of the virgin's chastity, who, to evade a rape cries out. I have read it with calmness and attention according to your request, page 32. The history of it, together with my illiterate remarks, are as follows:—

In verse 1, certain false teachers (like some

in our days wishing to innovate) taught the Gentile converts of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, the absolute necessity of circumcision, with whom Paul and Barnabas had no small disputation But neither party yielding, an appeal to a general synod is agreed to, which met at Jerusalem, consisting of apostles and elders. Immediately Paul, Barnabas, and certain others, are deputed to carry the appeal But before the general assembly met, the same unhallowed flame breaks out in the church of Jerusalem, which soon taught all the churches the necessity of a general synod. Immediately the apostles and elders came together to consider of this matter. You may notice it was apostles and elders that the appeal was to, ver 2. and it is only apostles and elders that meet judicatively to determine, ver. 6. Nothing about populace meeting for that end, nor is the appeal to such. And you know that when Paul delivered the decrees of this synod to the churches, Acts xvi. 4. they are expressly termed the decrees of the apostles and elders. Not a word of their being the decrees of the illiterate laity, which doubtless would have been the case had they been possessed of sole power according to your system.

My dear Sir I hope you will inform me what it was that induced you to assert, page 35, "That all the members of the Jerusalem

church sat in this assembly, and took an active part in the deliberation." I assure you I feel for you already while I anticipate your confusion of mind, when you hear that any one has observed this assertion. Your proof for it I fear is as yet unwritten in the word. Only but look at their number as specified above, which consisted of eight thousand one hundred and twenty, besides uncounted multitudes of both men and women, Acts v. 14. And in Acts xxi. James speaks of unnumbered thousands being added to this church. How absurd then my dear friend to suppose that "All these took an active part in the deliberations;" sat, reasoned, and voted there! Pray Sir would not this represent the God of order as the author of confusion? Why should children, who you know are church members but especially women who are expressly commanded by the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xiv. 34 "Not so much as to speak in the church." yet be admitted here to have decisive votes in framing the model, and settling the constitution of the first christian church in the world. Alas may I not exclaim how faintly do we see in divine things! when one of the most intelligent and best of men (for such I believe you to be) should be so far bewildered as to think so.

But instead of all this or any thing like it, try to shew me where in this assembly any of

the laity spoke one word; I grant that in the 7th verse some disputed with the apostles, but probably this was one of the Antioch seducers. Nay, but on the contrary it is asserted in the 12th verse, that all the multitude kept silence. I know it is objected from verse 22, that because the multitude approve of the apostles and elders choice of Judas and Silas, to go with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, to carry the decrees, therefore the whole multitude took an active part in framing them. My dear Sir how strange this to confound the choice of deligates to carry the decrees, with the divine authority of making them- How strange would it be to infer, that because all the people of God approve of the father's choice of Christ to be the messenger of the covenant; therefore they all sat at the counsel table, with the blessed three, and took an active part in managing the covenant.

But in order to prove that every individual took an active part in this assembly, you observe in page 34, "That the letters to Antioch are not from a representative counsel, but from the apostles, elders, and brethern at Jerusalem"—Here the emphasis is laid on the word brethern; yet whether these brethern were teachers, or taught, whether brethern in office, or only by profession, you do not tell me. One thing I know myself,

that all of them that are named are men in office, see verse 3. There it is said that "Judas and Silas being prophets themselves." Now both of these are said to be chosen men among the brethern; so if all the rest of them that are here called brethern were of this order, I see not why but their names should be at the signature, and would make nothing for popular government, and instead of militating against Presbytery would confirm it.

But in order to explode the idea of representation from this assembly altogether, you assert in page 34, "That the members that composed it were of the Jerusalem church alone, without commissioner or representative from any church on earth." My dear friend the high opinions I have hitherto entertained of you, forbids me to impute this assertion to any thing worse than inadvertancy; could I hide you and it, from the eyes both of wise men and mockers, I assure you it would be my delight, but I fear no apology nor exertion of mine can screen you. But when you write I hope you will inform me how Paul could be a member of the Jerusalem congregation, seeing after his conversion, which happened near Damascus, about sixty miles from Jerusalem, he returned not for three years after; and when he did return, he says in Gal. i. that he remained but fifteen days,

then departing, he saw the Jerusalem church no more for fourteen years. During this period he and Barnabas received ordination from the Presbytery of Antioch, Acts xiii. after which both are recognised as members of Synod, in this very assembly, this being their next return. But again do not the apostles accurately distinguish between the persons who in this synod were members of their own church, and who of Antioch. In verse 22, they say "They send chosen men of their *own company with Paul and Barnabas*, namely, Judas and Silus.

Secondly, Please to inform me how these certain others, which came with Paul from Antioch, could be members of the Jerusalem congregation, seeing Antioch lay about two hundred miles from Jerusalem? Is it not more probable then that these never worshiped one day in Jerusalem before. Now that these composed a part of this assembly is evident; and that they acted as representatives in it is indisputable for they were expressly sent to represent these churches as the most distressed people on earth;—nor distressed by sword or famine, not in danger of losing houses or lands, but what infinitely worse, the loss of their immortal souls. In this situation they represented them in this synod all which is evident from verse 24, where the synod in their letter back say,

" Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words subverting your souls."

But with a plain design to cut of all foreign interference at one stroke, in page 34 you exclaim thus, " How absurd would be their language upon the supposition there were representatives in it from Antioch, or others ' Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us.' Could the Antioch or other representatives put their signature to this letter? Could they say they went out from them? They went out from the church of Jerusalem, and no one could say they went out from us but the church of Jerusalem. The language ' Went out from us," plainly excludes from this assembly all members from foreign churches."

Now whether your rhetoric so logically displayed on these words, " Went out from us," bear analogy to sophism or genuine logic, I pretend not to determine. The learned that are versant in polemick studies can decide. However, you appear to exult in this argument, as if, like Goliah's sword, there was none like it; or like Sampson's hair, that wherein your great strength lies. But you know it is a maxim in reasoning that the argument that proves too much, proves nothing. Now if this language,

"Went out from us," excludes from this assembly all members from foreign churches; then Paul and those with him were not in this assembly at all, which for me to attempt to prove, would be to offer an insult to your reason, and to evince that they had votes in this synod would be superfluous, and to deny either would be to give the lie to the Holy Ghost; and that Paul and those with him were not members of the Jerusalem church, I presume has been sufficiently proven above; yet might not Paul and Barnabas, although representatives of other churches, yet as now members of synod might they not put their signature to these words "Went out from us," inasmuch as, when a synod is met they can all say collectively, that all the licenciates or junior members of any Presbytery under their inspection, went out from them, and yet they may be said to have gone out from their respective presbyteries and doubtless it was the Presbytery of Jerusalem that ordained these imposters; for, I presume, it is the province of Presbyteries to ordain, without dependence on the hands of the the laity, see Acts xiii. 1 Tim. iv. 14. Yet still in subordination to synods, as you see from the whole strain of this chapter. My dear friend might not one pause here and wonder at divine wisdom shewn on these words, "Went out from us." Thereby the

apostles distinguish their legitimate successors that go out from them by Divine warrant with Presbyterial ordination, from impostors, that go out only from the people, and receive both the keys, and power to exercise them from the laity. But again by these words "Went out from us" they distinguish between such as are legally ordained by a plurality (US) from such as are ordained by a single individual, as in the prelatic church.

In page 32, after having asserted that "In all this chapter there is not the least feature of modern Presbytery, you ask "Where is the Presbyterian subordination of courts here? Was the matter first tried in a session?" I answer is not this to darken counsel with words without knowledge. You might as well ask was the murderer first tried in a mannor court before he was brought before a judge of assize? How astonishing! that a Presbyterian minister should know so little about their discipline. as to suppose that a number of pastors should be tried for error at the bar of a congregational session. No wonder that you were so fickle, unstable, & easily drawn away, when you knew so little about their discipline You again ask "Was the matter next carried to a Presbytery?" I answer it was first carried to a Presbytery, and Presbyterian discipline says it should be

so. You ask "Was the appeal from a Presbytery?" I answer yes. and that to a synod of apostles & elders & to none else. as you see in verse 2. And although Paul who was not a whit behind the chiefest apostle, doubtless in conjunction with the Presbytery of Antioch, might have determined it: yet to teach after ages the divine right of appeals, together with the subordination of courts, they appeal to a synod. You next enquire "Who sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem?" I say it was the Presbytery of Antioch; you answer "This is easier said than proven;" by this you blasphemingly insinuate that it cannot be proven, but if the sequel should make it appear that my evidences are sufficient and legal. the apostles themselves being judges. would you not blush for boasting while putting on your harness? You next add that "There is as much evidence that it was the magistrates of Antioch that sent themas the supposed presbytery of that place; indeed sir if along with your other elopements you are turned erastian in your judgement I suppose you think there is more. You finally conclude in page 33, that 'It was the brethern that sent them;" I ask why not the sisterhood, at least in conjunction, seeing you assert in page 70, 71, that "The whole power of church discipline is lodged in the hands of church members. and that every individual has to be accountable for the per-

sonal discharge of it." Now you know tha women and children are individuals, and church members too, and generally more numerous in the church than men, consequently it was them that tried the Antioch seducers, it was them that appealed to a synod, and finally it was them that sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem.

In page 32, you assert that "It would puzzle the most metaphisical head to discover a Session or Presbytery, or either at Antioch." I hope Sir, I have convinced you above that this process should not come through the medium of a session; yet I think with the assistance you have given in page 52, it would not require much skill in metaphisics to discover a Presbytery at Antioch, there you say that "a plurality of pastors or elders in the same church is in 1 Tim. iv. 14. called a Presbytery" Now apply this to the church of Antioch and you will see that these very deligates Paul and Barnabas received ordination by a plurality of pastors in this very same church with the imposition of hands, which you allow is a Presbyterial action, 1 Tim. iv. 14, But least you should think that this argument is any way foreign because not contained in this disputed chapter, you may look to the 35th verse, and there you will find an uncounted number of pastors in this

very church; the text stands thus, "Paul and Barnabas continued in Antioch teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also;" and John is spoken of in the 37th verse as being there also.

Now seeing these met often for acts of government, as in Acts 13. to ordain, and in this chapter to try these impostors; I say all this put together, I suppose by this time you would not think it would require much skill in metaphisics to discover a Presbytery there. I hope my dear Sir by this time you are convinced that there was a sufficient number to sign the commission of Paul and Barnabas, even tho' names of neither the lay brethren nor sisterhood were at it.

Thus having at your request read this much disputed chapter with calmness and attention, and droped these few undigested hints, I now modestly ask you are you still of the same opinion as in page 32; namely, that it contains not the least feature of modern Presbytery; if you still continue to answer in the negative, I now ask does it contain any of the features of ancient apostolic Presbytery? I think I hear you now in extacy exclaim O yes, yes, no one in their reason would deny it; well then why but you continued to adhere to that and oppose all innovation, and not to make such an elopement from Pres-

bytery, name and thing, ancient and modern, apostolic and divine ?

Permit me now my dear Sir to ask whether or not all the essentials of a synod are to be found in this Jerusalem assembly, first members from the Presbytery of Antioch, and likewise members from the Presbytery of Jerusalem. Secondly, the business transacted here was such as had failed both the Presbyteries of Jerusalem and Antioch, and therefore came forward to them as a superior court in way of appeal, which shews clearly the absolute necessity of a general synod. Moreover, the decrees of this court bound not only as other scriptures, but with an ecclesiastic tie, all which is evident from the first copy issued out by synodical authority in the 28th verse, where they say that " it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to (US)" which mode of expression is not very frequent with the sacred pen-men as thus saith the Lord is in other cases deemed sufficient, but the churches head foreseeing the bold attempt that some would make to rob his ambassadors of that exclusive authority granted them in Matt. xvi. 19. of binding and loosing, therefore to leave such inexcusable, when the decrees of this synod are published by Paul through the churches in Acts xvi, 4. they are expressly said to be or-

dained by the apostles and elders: the Holy Ghost, although the chief operator in framing them, is not so much as mentioned.

But in order to rob the injured of the right of appeals in after ages, you say in page 25 that "the appeal from Antioch was an appeal to inspired authority" Now though I should grant you this, yet if this was all, and not intended to teach the subordination of courts, and the divine right of appeals to posterity, might they not have been satisfied by Paul at home, seeing he was inspired, & not a whit behind the very chiefest apostle. Nay, but on the contrary was he not caught up to third heavens, and saw and heard such things as no apostle or other mortal ever saw. Strange then that after all this he should submit what he knew to be his Lord's mind to the vote and deliberations of uncounted thousands of all ages and sex, men, women and children, unequaled absurdity!—TELL IT NOT IN GATH.

But granting that this was an appeal to inspired authority, and not to a Synod, pray who were the subjects of inspiration appealed to? But as this question is so childish, you may look on it as an insult to your advanced skill in theology, and therefore with an air of disgust may answer, To whom should it be but the apostles, seeing the commandments

of the apostles are said to be the commandments of the Lord, 1 Cor. iv 37 Well then if this is your answer, I could almost congratulate you with the right hand of fellowship; but if you should say that as they were apostles and elders to whom the appeal was made, therefore they were apostles and elders jointly that were clothed with inspired authority. Whether these elders were all pastors, or some ruling elders, it matters not here. I look upon it as an axiom with both you and me that they were ordinary officers, and therefore now ask when or where were such employed in penning canonic scripture? for you allow the decrees of this assembly to be such Or where did the apostles ask advice at any time what they would set down as scripture? On the contrary is it not said in 2 Peter i. 21. that prophesy came not in old times by the will of men, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? not as they were directed by him or her that occupied the next seat. But we may hear your own refined sentiments on the subject in page 35; there you assert that "all the members of the Jerusalem church sat in this assembly and took an active part in the deliberations;" the substance of which, you know, is contained in the decrees, and this you admit is sacred writ.

Now what is the native consequence of all

this? Shall I put it into language? I shudder at the thought! What is it? Why that uncounted thousands and unnumbered multitudes, even above eight thousand one hundred and twenty of every age and sex were all vested with inspired authority, not only to new model the church, decree in matters of faith, but even settle the constitution of the christian church to the world's end. HORRIBLE THOUGHT! No wonder that you say that the like or a similar case can never happen again in the world. But when you were a Presbyterian, was it a received sentiment with them that their faith should be built on the foundation of the apostles, according to Eph. ii. 20.? But is it now your declared sentiments as an independent, that your faith should be built on the deliberations of a promiscuous multitude of every age and sex. But far be it from me dear Sir to drop the least irritating hint on the subject; the bare repetition of it would be grating enough to the feelings of some; yet I hope you will permit me to ask, why, in a consistancy with your own system, but the like, or a similar case may happen again in the world. Seeing all the peculiarity that is here is only just the trial of a few bishops at the bar of the laity of a single congregation. At the bar of the laity did I say? Yes at the bar of the laity; for their number being probably a thousand to one of apostles and elders, the

llance of power was destroyed; and not
ly so, but yourself allow in page 70, that
e whole power of church discipline is lodg-
l in the hands of church members, conse-
uently apostles and elders had no power
ere but what they had in common with be-
eving women & children. But as if this was
ven too much power to intrust church rulers
ith, you say in the same page, "That the
hole church is to judge the accused person,
ut church rulers are to execute the judg-
ient." What is this but to allow church mem-
ers the legislative power, but church rulers
nly the executive; or in other words you
llow the illiterate laity to occupy the honour-
ble seat of the judge, while the ambassadors
f Christ must stoop to the ignoble and di-
inutive task of executioners.

I am sorry my dear Sir, for your sake, that
here is so much evidence that your publica-
ion took wing from the first rude undigested
manuscript, before you took time to revise or
correct it. But if "the like or a similar case
can never happen again in the world,' I ask
if this was a temporary, extraordinary and
apostolic meeting, why had the laity votes?
And again, if it was an ordinary meeting in
which the laity had sole power, how came it
that their decisions are canonic scripture?

And again, if all the apostolic churches
were independent and in subordination to no

court, how came it that the independe
church of Jerusalem made laws which bou
the independent churches of Antioch, Syri
and Sicilia. In page 36, you say that " t
decisions of the church of Jerusalem we
the issue of the infallible interpretation
scripture, & that none can plead this as a pr
cedent for any body of men to settle contr
verted points for others, who cannot plead t
gift of infallible interpretation of scriptur

Now who they were in this church, th
were thus qualified with this infallible gi
I can learn from page 70, namely, the lait
There you say " the church judgeth, b
church rulers execute the judgment," so t
church is distinguished from her pastors a
her decisions you say were the infallible i
terpretations of Scripture. Consequently
was the church (that is the laity) that enac
ed the decrees of this assembly, and th
empowered the apostles to publish and ex
cute them. Astonishing sentiment, publis
it not in the streets of Askelon, least th
deistical world should laugh; and this the
might to hear such a distinguished friend
revelation suggest that the uncounted mul
tudes and thousands that were members
this church, were all possesed of the infallibl
gift of interpretation of scripture. What
pity when you were attributing infallibilit
to any that you did not like a neighbourin

urch, ascribe it to their clerical head, and
ot to the laity. If you should reply that it
as only the apostles that were thus gifted,
is would not avail you, seeing it is the
urch as distinguished from her rulers that
dgeth, and apostles who were church rulers
ere only to execute the judgment and you
y that every member of this church took
active part in the deliberations and that
eir decisions were the infallible interpretation
scripture, therefore it does not avail you
ough the apostles were thus gifted, if the
ity was not. But while I hear you assert
at this assembly is no precedent for any
ody of men in settling controverted matters
r others, except they be equally qualified;
question occurs to my mind, which I can-
idly acknowledge I am not able to solve,
amely, what actions of the apostles were
nitable and what not. And while I drop
ie following undigested thoughts I wait with
atience for your more mature answer; and
rst I think no actions of an extraordinary
ind, such as immediate mission, universal
ommission, infallible inspiration, power of
orking miracles, &c are to be imitated;
ut in all things wherein they acted as ordi-
ary officers they are to be imitated; such
s preaching, baptizing, ordaining, excom-
nunicating & sitting in church courts &c &
n this last are they employed in this chapter;
nd that as ordinary pastors, which is evi-

dent from the appeal from Antioch, verse 2
being equally made to apostles and elder
without any superiority supposed; and i
verse 6, elders meet on equal footing wit
apostles to determine disputes Thus whi
equality exists in this synod, I ask where
there any superiority either supposed, gran
ed, or claimed, by the apostles? Where d
they in this synod, upon bare apostolic au
thority, introduce a new code of laws
Where do they upon the aut ority of ex
traordinary internal impulse enforce their ne
system? Or where do they, as at othe
times, or like other extraordinary officer
bring forward their new model of churc
government with a thus saith the Lord. O
the contrary is not all the reasons of the
movements taken from external written rev
lation? From all which it appears evide
tha. the church's head designed that this a
sembly and its movements should be an exac
model and precedent for church courts, e
pecially synods to the world's end.

I am sorry indeed my dear Sir to see tha
when argument fail, and you have no furthe
ground to go upon, eith r real or pretended
you have recourse to another mode, designe
to be no less inimical to your former friends
namely to point out Presbytery before he
enemies in the most ludicrous manner tha
probably your pencil is capable of. Thi

plan, together with substituting bare assertions in place of positive proof, is a proof that almost pervades your whole performance. See page 20, where you say that "Classical Presbytery is the most clumsy and complicated machine that could possibly be invented, and a tedious and roundabout way of settling differences." My dear friend, whatever reason you may have to fear that some might retaliate here, yet far be it from me, I would rather convince you that the sons of Presbytery like her author, return not railing for railing, and when reviled revile not again; yet would modestly ask, whether popular or representative government is the most clumsy? Whether the ambassadors of Christ, who have got the tongue of the learned, and have his promised presence to the world's end, Matt. 28. I say whether these or the illiterate peasantry, however holy they may be, are likely to determine more wisely in the most critical cases? Pray Sir, if the synodical way of doing business be tedious, clumsy, and roundabout, is not your phantom of the Jerusalem assembly and their way of doing business far more so; while you suppose that all the unnumbered thousands that were members of that church had to be reasoned with, and voted round to every article. Your next objection against synods is founded on distance, and the number of their

members. But pray did you ever attend a synod more numerous than the supposed independent assembly that you say met at Jerusalem? In page 20, you say "Several hundred men from the most distant parts of a kingdom or province, meeting annually, besides all their subordinate meetings, is a thing which bears no resemblance to the simplicity of other gospel institutions, when united to these it is like a sober plain drest gentleman with a large military hat and feather" Now seeing a chief ground of your objections against synods is distance, what a pity is it that the same spirit which operated upon Abraham did not animate you; he at the Divine biding left his couutry and friends, went into a land he knew not, left the desire of his eyes, took with him the blooming heir of promise, travelled a long and dreary journey with the heart-rending design of sacrificing the endearing youth. And Elijah scruples not at a forty days journey when his Lord commands. All the males in Israel (come to age) appear at Jerusalem three times in the year, and that from the most distant parts of the kingdom or province. But it may be you will object here and say what does all this avail. This was under the shadowy dispensation, and this was a part of the yoke that neither we nor our forefathers was able to bear. But shew me under the New Testament where any by divine warrant jour-

neyed as far to synods as the members of the Synod of Ulster do now to Cookstown, and I freely will grant you all. Well then I take it for granted that I have satisfied you above that the Jerusalem assembly had members who journeyed farther than the members of the Synod of Ulster do now to Cookstown, for Antioch was about two hundred miles from Jerusalem, and you cannot deny but they that attended it had divine warrant for their attendance, for although they acted as ordinary pastors when they came, yet in an extraordinary way they were warned to come. See Gal. 2. ii where Paul expressly asserts that he went up by Revelation. And you acknowledge in page 36 that this was the very time. Now admitting that this assembly had all the essentials of a synod, and that the members who composed it came a greater distance than the members of the synod of Ulster do now to Cookstown, and that they had divine authority for their attendance, and all this under the New Testament, I say all this put together, what a pity that my pious opposer should think the church complete without them, and represent her and them under the ludicrous metaphor of a huge military hat & feather on a sober plain dressed gentleman. But might not your phantom of the Jerusalem assembly, where you say the laity had sole power of judging, and apostles and elders only a dele-

gated power to execute the judgment, remind one of inconsistency. Might not such a picture remind one of a legally called parliament that is turned insane, and now, under the influence of lunacy, signs over their legislative authority into the hands of the common populace? But, were it not that I am not disposed to retaliate, I would tell you that your representation of this assembly sets servants on horseback while princes must go on foot; and this turns all things upside down. Might it not remind you of your own plain dressed gentleman, that is now deranged; vainly attempting to carry his horse, and at the same time wearing his boots and spurs on his forehead.

I am truly sorry, my dear Sir, that I am constrained to tell you, that there are none, who have read the history of the popes, with their cavillings and arguments, against general councils, but might almost suppose that you had transcribed them, and bring them out, now and then, against general synods. Only, with this difference, they allow that themselves are the first receptacle of church power while the under clergy have it only from them at the second hand. But your system allows the laity to be the first receptacle of church power, and that pastors have it only from them by delegation, or if you please at second hand.

Indeed Sir, I see little more in your performance that I think militates with any force against Presbytery. I know there are a number of unproven assertions, which, admitting they were even true, strike more against apostacy from Presbytery, than Presbytery itself. A few of which you may see in page 12, 13, 14, and 20. But, as the repetation of them in full might occasion a blush, I forbear, and turn my attention to enquire a little unto independency. And here I candidly acknowledge, that want of literature, unacquaintedness with controvercy, together with the novelty of your system, renders me incapable of correct thought upon the subject, or of cloathing my ideas in an intelligent manner. But however I find myself happily introduced by your timely discovery of your system in page 72, where you assert that "dicipline and all church power are committed to an individual church;" and page 70, that "Excommunication, though the highest act of church authority, is peculiarly the business of the whole church;" and "The restoration of fallen members, upon repentance, is also the business of the whole church;" and that "Every one has the king's commission, and the king's command, to act in consert with their brethern."

Now, if I mistake not, excommunication

and restoration, are what is in Mat. xvi. 19, called binding and loosing. Now, to whomsoever this power is given, to them are the keys of the kingdom of heaven given, which I think are nearly the same thing In consequence of which the same persons are authorized to go forth, teach, preach, and baptize. But I hope, my pious opposer will permit me to ask, whether were the keys given into the hands of the believing laity, or into the hands of the apostles, in Mat. xvi. 19? whether into the hands of Peter, or into the hands of Mary Magdalene, or Mary, the mother of James? whither into the hand of Peter, as representing believers, or as representing church guides? the latter of these, I know, you will deny, the former, probably, would be your choice, were it not that both equally imply representation, and this is an idea you detest, as unscriptural; therefore it may be that you will deny both, rather than admit a thing so improper, and choose rather to fall in with a sister (I should here said mother) church, who asserts that Peter received the keys as prince of apostles, or if you please, as bishop of bishops But I hope better things of you, though I thus speak, and, therefore, would venture to anticipate, that your answer will be, that Peter received them as the representative of believers. Well, if in this respect he received them, are not believing women authorized ambassadors of

Christ? Secondly—are not the infants of believing parents, born key-bearers? that is they are born bishops. Thirdly—if believing alone entitled to the excercise of the keys, then in case a believer fall under scandal, does he then lose the excercise of the keys? if he does, is not the saints perseverance denied? which sentiment, I know is dear to you. If he does *not*, while he appears before his offended brethern, as a delinquent, does he not occupy the strange stand of a criminal, a judge, and a jury at the same time? But to whomsoever it was that the keys were delivered, was it not said to the same person 'Go forth, teach, preach, and baptize? I ask then, why but believing women preach, as well as excommunicate? why but they ordain, as well as depose? why but they baptize, as well as dissolve from scandal? I see, I am anticipated in my last question, by your asserting in page 69, that "Every member has the king's command to act in consert with his brethern about the affairs of his house. Seeing then that baptism has ever been the avenue through which members have been received into the church, I ask then, is it possible that you approve of women baptizing? and yet why but they should? seeing every individual has to be accountable for their personal discharge of the highest act of church power, and so is in full possession of the power of the keys, and, therefore, has

the king's warrant, and command, to go forth, teach, preach, and baptize. Oh! my dear Sir! will you never be convinced of the evil of prostituting the keys of the kingdom of heaven? these sacred utensils which none may use, but at their peril, except such as are of the geniune apostolic succession! Only try to answer the apostle's question in 1 Cor. xii., in a consistancy with your own vague use of the keys, he asks "Are all prophets? are all teachers? your answer according to your hypothesis must be in the affirmative, while in my opinion these questions imply the strongest negation. And in the 28th verse, he avers, that God hath set *some* in the church, first apostles, next prophets, next teachers, which surely implies that he has not set *all*. He likewise states a comparison between the church and a natural body, and to shew there should be no schism in the same, shews the necessity of every part. But does not your hypothesis represent the whole body as being eye? The scripture every where speak of pastors under the idea of shepherds. But does not your system give every believer, man, woman, and child, the shepherds crook and staff. And yet alas! your childish phamtom leaves all such shepherds without a flock, for if every man be shepherd there are none to constitute a flock. But, in oposition to this whole mass of anarchy, the scripture, as clearly as a sun beam,

eclares that qualified church officers receive
e keys immediately from the hand of Christ,
id these are successively transmitted dy or-
nation, though they are to exercise in all
e different departments of their office, with-
it regard to the claims of usurpers, whe-
ier above them or below them, and that to
iem pertains the exclusive right to preach,
id baptize is such a settled scripture axiom,
hich for me to attempt to prove would be
o offer an insult to your reason. Secondly,
o them peatains the right to hear and receive
harges against offenders. Thus the house
f Chloe prefer a charge against the Corin-
ians to Paul, 1 Cor. i. And the Presby-
ery of Antioch heard the libel against sedu-
ers, Acts xv. And the synod of Jerusalem
ear and determine the same, after it had
ailed both the Presbyteries of Jerusalem and
Antioch. And it is the Presbytery of Ephesus
hat try and condemn imposters, Rev. ii. and
is them (not the peasantry) that Paul en-
oins to reprove, rebuke, and exort with all
uthority Fourthly, I would fondly flatter
nyself that you would not risk your honour
by denying them the exclusive right of ordi-
nation and that in a Presbyterial capacity.
You know it was a Presbytery that ordained
Matthias Acts i and it was a Presbytery that
ordained the deacons Acts vi And it was a
Presbytery that ordained Barnabas and Saul,
Acts xiii. & it was a Presbytery that ordained

Timothy, 1 Tim. iv 14. and it was the Pres
bytery of Jerusalem that ordained the impos
tors that was tried by the Presbytery of An
tioch, Acts xv. Fifthly, I only add, that ex
communication is likewise their province, an
theirs exclusively You know it was Pau
that excommunicated Hymenius and Alex
ander, 1 Tim. i 20. and it was him (not th
laity) that authoritatively prejudged the inces
tuous person, 1 Cor. v. so as that the Corin
thian Presbytery had nothing to do, whe
constituted in the name of the Lord Jesu
Christ, but with Paul's spirit to execute th
judgment Now, seeing you assert that ever
church member has the king's command an
commission to attend to the affairs of hi
house, and that every individual has to be ac
countable for the personal discharge of it.
take it for granted that women and childre
are church members; I call upon you nov
to shew me in all the word of God where an
such are authorized officially to admonish
reprove, rebuke, exort, to try offenders ju
dicatively, excommunicate, dissolve from
scandal, ordain, preach, baptize, administe
the Lord's Supper I ask where are we com
manded to know such to be over us in th
Lord, and to obey women that have the rul
over us, and to submit ourselves to them fo
they watch for our souls? On the contrary
instead of exercising the keys in the above
particulars, are they not expressly command

in 1 Cor. xiv. 34. to be silent in the urch, for it is not permitted unto them so uch as to speak? Before I conclude might not take up a lamentation for the depravity our nature, and say alas! how are we llen! Man, who at first was not only qua-ied for having rule over all his Maker's orks here below, but had the rule given him en over the women, though in some res-ects she was his equal, is now obliged to come her inferior, in case he be a church ficer. for in that case he is subject to each ember of the church, and of course to each oman. Alas! what a shock has our nature stained. when such a shining light as he who as *once* the Rev. Alexander Carson, should ow be so far infatuated as to glory in that his privilege. which the Lord threatened inflict on sinning Israel as a scourge, name-y, that women and children should rule them, aiah, iii.

I shall however, desist from asking any ore questions, least you should think that like Ham, was as much disposed to expose ay father's nakedness as to receive instruc-ions I forbear asking what exertions you sed to reclaim your supposed offending bre-hern of synod before you left them; I take it or granted that you used every means in your ower, by private admonition, reasoning, and writing, and when this failed, libelled them

to their respective Presbyteries, and when this proved abortive that you delated them to synod, a number of whom you still suppose more faithful. All this course of process I hope you have gone through committing them and these means so used to God, by fervent prayer, before you libelled them to the world, for such errors in sentiment and scandalous practice as I forbear to mention, admitting they were even true. But might it not have been as prudent in you, before a deistical age like Shem to have thrown the lap of your garment over them, as to have acted the part of Ham to expose your father's nakedness; and the more especially, least any one should be tempted to think that it was as much in the way of apology for your own elopement, as zeal for pure communion. You know what was the conduct of our Lord, who doubtless in the days of his humiliation found as much defection in the Jewish church as you found in the Presbyterian; yet he did not make a faction, erect a new sect, and then libel his former connections. No he used every exertion Divine Wisdom thought proper to stem the unhallowed torrent, and at the same time enjoined the strictest adherence to the Mosaic dispensation.*

* I do not disaprove of christian endeavours to obtain pure communion; but if a man thinks that impurity has got into a church, he should use the means pre-

But I forbear to add any thing more least your feelings should be touched, and you, like Pharaoh's butler, constrained to say I do remember my faults this day.

My dear Sir, your distinguished character convinces me that while you glance over my unpolished lines, you will act the christian rather than the critic; I hope it will appear to you that my sincere desire is to find out truth; and whatever defects appear in my rustic researches, that you will cover them with the veil of christian apology; but if in any instance I have used imprudent keeness, I hope you will impute it to unskillfulness in

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scribed by God to restore purity, not apostize, and thereby endeavour to subvert the foundations of the church's government, because he may see something defective in her discipline. He would be a froward son that would attempt to persuade all the children of a family, that the whole provisions of the family were poisonous, because he perceived that the children were not as warmly or as richly cloathed as they ought to be. And so to tempt the children to forsake the family on this ground. But does not Mr. Carson act the same part, where he cries out the discipliine of the synod of Ulster is impure, therefore let us reject her church government. Is not this to act like the adversaries of Judah, mentioned Ezra iv. 2. who said "Let us build with you." But when the Jews would not comply with their terms, they did all that was in their power to stop the building of the temple, and overturn the building to its foundation.

controvercy, together with my former strict adherence to Presbytery, which I have often thought was invincible, and you were the very first I ever saw attempting to overthrow it. Yet if, after all you should still object that I have used sharpness of words, I have no better apology than what the sons of Jacob gave their father for their outrage against the son of Hamor, for conduct that probably was not altogether unlike your's Say they "why should he deal with our sister as with one that is an harlot." I only add, that whatever imperfections you may notice in the above lines, you may impute them to myself alone, as I can solemnly assure you I never consulted mortal upon earth on the subject, not so much as my own pastor, nor did he know when I wrote; my bible alone was my chief directory, for yourself can witness for me, that I have not in one instance enforced my sentiments with any human authority. But I remain your's, with all due respects,

ANDREW STEVENSON.

LETTER II.

REV. SIR,

With the greatest degree of self-diffidence I address you, the second time, and the more especially because unhappily we differ in judgment. It is a blessing, however, that it is hopeful that we differ only in extra essentials. This, however, I would think the less of, if you had never been farther advanced in the knowledge of the truth, but apostacy, even in things comparatively little, is not a very hopeful case. Yet, I candidly acknowledge, your splendid abilities shine so conspicuously in defence of your new system, that I have often lamented that they were not devoted to the defence of the truth; nor did I think that your principles could have admitted of such a defence; nor that the highest degree of sophism could have produced such apparently strong arguments against Presbytery; all which is very forbidding to such a one as I, to oppose any thing that you defend, or defend any thing that you oppose, and might be a ready way whereby truth might be wounded in the house of her friends. There-

fore whatever may appear in the sequel is not so much as a pretended defence of any system, or yet a refutation of any, but just a few undigested thoughts on your objections against the office of the ruling elder. That thereby you may have an opportunity of speaking a little more expressly, and likewise rectifying my mistakes upon the subject.

In my last I glanced a little at Presbytery in general, faintly dropping some probatory hints. I also made some slight observations upon the system of independency, with some remarks expressive of disaprobation. In all which you will see little, but chaos instead of order; confused thoughts instead of close reasoning.

I know it ought to have been the scholar, the philosopher, the logician, that should have addressed you; instead of which, it is the unlearned, the rustic, and the peasant. Yet, though it is thus, God sometimes chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and prudent. And reveals himself to babes, while he hides himself from the wise and prudent Therefore, if any thing in the sequel should appear to be genuine, I hope you will not despise it, on account of my childish lispings

In chapter fourth, you examine, try, and condemn Presbytery in general. In chapter fifth, you examine, try, and condemn the ruling elders office, in particular, or, as you

call it the lay elders office, which, in my opinion, is a term peculiar to yourself, and, I think, unknown both in scripture and church history—and is, I presume, as contradictory to common sense as to talk of a square circle, a blind guide, or a white black. Paul in 1 Tim. v. 17. calls them ruling elders, and the ancient Purpurius, in a letter to Salvanus, dated 103. calls them ecclesiastical men. But were I possessed of but half your natural and acquired talents, I presume, I could evince that the ruling elders office is not only ordinary & perpetual, but that it is distinct from the office of both pastor and deacon. But more of this afterwards; my present design is for a moment to trace your objections against this office, with some remarks expressive of attachment to it.

Your first objection, page 41, is "Presbyterians themselves are not agreed, either as to the foundation, extent, or prerogatives of this office, a circumstance that will go far in the judgment of every unprejudiced enquirer to prove that the office is not scriptural."—Here I call upon you to inform me where any of our standards or any treatise wrote on church government, that ever got the approbation of a general assembly since the year 1638, differed on the subject? But least you should be at a loss for proper documents for that end, I hope you will not delay

writing till then, least it should be tedious before you obtain them. Pray, Sir, might it not have been prudent in you to have produced your proof for this assertion when you made it, and not have exposed yourself to a suspicion of incapacity But, though you even now could prove our disagreement on the subject, might I not call in question the propriety of your inference, namely, that "it is a circumstance that will go far in the judgment of every unprejudiced enquirer to prove that the office is not scriptural." My dear Sir, you know that it is a mournful truth that all professing christians are not agreed about, the foundation, extent, or prerogatives of our Lord's mediatory office. But should you infer from thence that this is a circumstance that will go far in the judgment of every unprejudiced enquirer to prove that he is not possessed of such an office; if you should, could you blame me if I should be so plain as to tell you that this, to call it no worse, would be coarse logic. You next assert, that "a lay elder (as you say) is composed of a new testament deacon, the half of a new testament pastor, as he is a church ruler, and a part of the office of an apostle as a legislator to make laws for the church."—I here confess, that, till now, I did not know that even apostles themselves were possessed of legislative authority in Zion; I really thought that the Lord Christ was exclusively vested with

this authority, as the Father ever speaks of setting one king upon his holy hill; but till now never heard that he had set twelve, viz. all the apostles. I likewise thought, that even apostles themselves only occupied the humble stand of heralds about the King's court, ready to receive the law from the Prince's mouth, and declare it to his subjects, but had no thought that they were possessed of legislature. And even yet, (strange to tell it) I am somehow so incredulous, that notwithstanding all your shining abilities, together with my high opinion of your personal piety, I can scarcely believe that the apostles were possessed of legislature; and my reason is, they themselves so absolutely disclaim it. Paul says they were the commandments of the Lord that he writes, not his own legislations, and denies that he has dominion over our faith. And Peter strongly prohibits any from being lords over God's heritage. And John declares it was what the spirit said to the churches that he wrote. No claim here to legislature.

My dear Sir, from principles of pure friendship I tell you, that I think I might here pause a little, and wonder at the depths of God's ways with men You thought to blacken this office before the eyes of the unwary, by imputing to such officers the usurpation of apostolic legislature, which thing

in itself you may now see has no existence. And could you now prove the charge against apostles, I think your evidence would bring them in guilty of rebellion against the son of God But seeing they plead not guilty, and bring such strong exculpatory evidence, and you at the same time sustaining the charge, I shudder while I anticipate the decision, when the day shall declare it; but I hope you will in time stop process & withdraw the action; if not my soul shall weep in secret for your folly. But you say that "a lay elder is composed of a new testament deacon, and the half of a new testament elder or pastor as he is a church ruler." Here, with humble diffidence, I would suggest that God, the fountain of all power, hath included all inferior power and office of the same kind in the superior. Thus a general (if need be) may in the day of battle, lawfully act as a subaltern. A peer of the realm may act as an inferior magistrate, when necessary, but none may lawfully reverse this order. Thus we find the apostles exercising themselves in all the inferior ecclesiastical offices, even down to a deacon But if any would reverse this order it would be at their peril. Of consequence the elders and deacons office is included in the pastors, yet neither of those may usurp the office of the pastor. Thus the deacon's office is included in the ruling elder's, and yet the deacon has no rule in the

church, nor is the ruling elders office founded upon his. You say in page 45. that "no man may combine any two of these offices more than make a new order over the rest." But if the church's head has combined them, in the manner above discribed, dare you call in question the combination? If you would might I not ask you, like Paul in another case, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?

In page 41, you say "As to the scriptural authority of lay elders, some refer us to the office of the deacon the name is not scriptural, say they, yet the office is." It is a pity, Sir, that it was not convenient for you to specify who these some are, that refer us to the deacons office for the scripture authority of the ruling elder. But, I here appeal to yourself if this is not your mode to insinuate what answers a turn without producing proof. I think this is done, not less than three times, in this and the following page. But seeing you do not say possitively who these some are, that speak thus, permit me to tell you that they are not Presbyterians, because your assertion is neither consistant with Presbytery nor common sense. What corps of military officers is it, who, while acting lawfully, being charged with intrusion and imposture, instead of producing their commission from their superiors, would refer their

accuser to the office of their hospital inspector, or treasurer, as their authority for acting judicatively in a court martial, and say, although the name treasurer is not strictly military, yet the office is, when exercised in favour of invalids; and yet who dare deny but any of the above company of officers might lawfully inspect into their military hospital, & relieve their distressed, dismembered invalids; all which shews that all inferior office of the some kind is included in the superior, and yet the superior is not founded on this. You next subjoin that "if he be the same as the deacon, let him do the office of the deacon only." You might as well say, if the apostles were deacons, which you are sure they were, why but they did the office of a deacon only? Or if it be your duty to be mindful of the poor, as you are sure it is, why but you do the office of the deacon only? You again ask "if he be the deacon why has he been called elder? Pray, Sir, who called him the deacon? it was not any of our standards nor acts of assembly; and, therefore, if ever you heard any one speak so probibly it has been one that has made an elopement from Presbytery, and now thinking to apologize for his apostacy, misrepresents things thus, and occupies the seat of the scorner. You next ask "has not the father the best right to name the child? I answer yes; and so he has in 1 Tim. v. 17. There he express-

ly calls them elders. You say in page 42, that " it is not a very modest supposition, for men to think that they could give a more proper and decent name to this office, than the spirit of God has done." Indeed, Sir, I perfectly agree with you. But pray who is it that is guilty? The spirit says in 1 Tim. v. 17. that they are elders; and not only so, but elders that rule, and we agree, and call them ruling elders; while you, spurning at the spirit's diction, in contempt give them a more decent name, as you think, that is lay elders.

In page 42, you say " there are others who pretend to find both name and office in the new testament, and produce as their authority 1 Tim. v. 17. ' Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in word and doctrine ' Here say they is an evident distinction between teaching and ruling elders, there must be some to rule and others to teach " Indeed, Sir, I think there is a good deal of art in your mode of speaking, you say there are *others* who pretend to find both name and office in the new testament, but do not pretend to tell who these *others* are; and I think this is wisdom, as there is no such name as lay elder in all the new testament. The penmen spoke as they were inspired, calling them ruling elders, and independent

Mockers were not by one thousand and six hundred years, so early. Indeed, Sir, I think there would have been as much truth in your remarks, justice done to your opponents, and honour to yourself, if you had never introduced the fables of your nameless authors; but just commenced your attack, by asserting that all Presbyterians, except the ignorant and prejudiced, were agreed that both name and office of the ruling elder can be proven from many places of the new testament. It might be proven, even from this text, that you have chosen as the seat of the war, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in word and doctrine." Now that a distinction of orders is apparent from these words, I presume the few following remarks might evince :—First, The officers here mentioned are by divine authority styled elders; 2dly, Vested with rule in the church; 3dly, Approven of by God in their rule; 4thly, A reward promised to them for their work; and finally, distinguished from such as labour in word and doctrine. The term elder I see, has many exceptions in the new testament; First It stands for men of ancient times, & so is opposed to modern, Matt. xv. 2. 2dly, It is expressive of men advanced in years, although living, and so is opposed to younger, 1 Tim. v. 1. And 3dly, It stands for elders in function or office, and so is

opposed to private men not in office, Acts xiv. 23. And in this sense, I presume, it is taken in this place. The name elder, when applied to church officers, seems to have rule and authority written on it, for it is often applied to civil rulers, as in Ruth iv. 2. And you should know that it is a general term, agreeing both to them that rule in the lowest circles, and to them that rule in a higher. The one only rules in the lowest department of rule, while the other besides this rules in a higher, here termed labouring in word and doctrine, but both are elders. 2dly, They are not only styled elders, but vested with rule in the church This is not only evident from the text, but from the very name elder, which implies authority both in church and state. And yourself allow in page 49, that "in the Greek it signifies a military officer." To this translation I have no objection, for you know such not only disciple their men go before, and lead on, but authoritatively command all that follow. Surely, then, according to your own definition of the name elder, it applies well, not only to such as go before others by doctrine and example, but also to such as govern and rule others by lawful authority. And in the last sense, I presume the word rule is taken in 1 Tim. iii. 4. one that ruleth his own house, &c. It is evident then that the rule

which elders are vested with is ecclesiastic, not domestic, as in the text last alluded to. So then we have in the text not only the office, as to the thing but the very name —let the elders that rule well, &c. 3dly, Does it not appear, as with a sunbeam, that these elders are approven of by God in their rule? If so does not this amount to a divine institution? Now seeing God commends their ruling well, did no power in the church belong to them, for the matter, God would never commend nor approve of them for the manner. Surely, he cannot be counted with God to do any thing well, that has no right to do it at all. But again, it appears that God not only commends their ruling well, but commands it to be honourably rewarded, and that with double honour. Now where God appoints rewards, surely he approves of that which he rewards; and that which he approves of surely has divine authority. Finally, these elders vested with rule in the church, and divinely approven of by God in their rule, are distinct from such as labour in word and doctrine. I think this is evident from the text; for there is a general term, to wit, elder under which the several kinds of officers mentioned in the text are comprehended. Again, there are two distinct kinds of elders, they that rule, and they that labour. Moreover, there are two remarkable words in the text, to wit, ruling,

and labouring. The one only rules in inferior matters, that is all his work; while the other, over and besides, rules in a higher circle, here expressed by labouring in word and doctrine; yet both are elders, just as all men in military life are soldiers, yet it is the lowest order that is emphatically termed so. Soldiers of an higher order are distinguished by a superadded distinctive title, such as captain, colonel, general, &c. yet all are soldiers. Again, there are two distinct articles annexed to the words ruling and labouring, to wit, *they* that rule, and *they* that labour. Moreover, I think, that the word *especially* is emphatically set in the text to distinguish these two orders of elders. You know the words are *especially* they that labour, &c. Indeed, I presume, that wherever the word *especially* is found in the new testament it is used to distinguish persons from persons, and things from things. Thus in 1 Tim. v. 8. If any man provide not for his own, and *especially* for those of his own house, &c. Gal. vi. 10. Let us do good to all men, *especially* unto them that are of the household of faith. Therefore if the word *especially* is not used to distinguish persons from persons, and things from things, I know not how you will explain this and many other places of scripture. Now, from these few simple remarks, I presume, it is indisputa-

bly clear from the text, even without any explanation, that the officers here mentioned are by the Holy Ghost 1st styled elders, 2dly, vested with rule, 3dly, approven of by God in their rule, 4thly, promised a reward for their work, and finally, distinguished from such as labour in word and doctrine. Now, if this is so why do you account them pretenders, that can so plainly shew both name and office of the ruling elder in the new testament? Or why do you deny a distinction between the ruling and preaching elder? To this you reply in page 42, "Allowing the Presbyterian explanation of the text in its utmost latitude, what does this make, supposing that there should be a body of lay elders to join with the preaching elders in ruling a church, this gives no countenance to a church session as a body of legislators to make laws, rules, and regulations for the congregation, their being church rulers does not constitute them church legislators." My dear Sir, this charge of ruling elders being legislators, is a charge that pervades almost every page. Yet, notwithstanding your keen resentment against the office, you have so much caution and care of your own honour as not so much as attempt once to prove it, or produce one instance to shew wherein they are guilty. I now ask who constituted them legislators? I assert that it was neither our church nor church's head. My probation is indisputable.

I appeal to the scriptures, or their duplicate, our form of church government, extant nearly these 200 years, and still annexed to our confession of faith. In the compiling of which our reformers, according to the divine bidding Ez. xliii 11 have shewed us the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the laws thereof, and they wrote it in a book, that we might keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof. And although I have been at many such courts, where the laws of the house recognize their power, yet I never saw such usurpation as you charge them with, no not in one instance. Their care was to learn the laws of the house, and put them into execution. But if you can prove the charge against them, I shall freely acknowledge it was apostacy from, and rebellion against the laws of the house. But, as you do not so much as pretend to prove any of your charges, I shall pass it over, only reminding you that such conduct as this is in Jer. xviii. termed a smiting with the tongue.

In page 43, you "allow from the text an order of ruling elders distinct from preaching elders," but say "this gives no countenance to a body of men called lay elders. Such ruling elders would be as really pastors,

bishops, minister, as the preaching elder." My kind Friend, I congratulate you on your confession; and I acknowledge obligations for granting from the text an order of ruling elders distinct from preaching elders; and am still more happy that it is in my power, not only to return you the compliment, but even I can pay you in kind; and therefore freely grant you the full force of your assertion; namely, that this gives no countenance to a body of men called lay elders. Why should it? seeing scripture and church history are silent about such an order in the church. Indeed, I grant, that the scripture just about one hundred times applies the term elder to civil magistrates. Now, seeing these are in scripture termed elders, if you please they may be called lay elders, for God has not set magistrates as such in the church, but in the state. But seeing you assert that such ruling elders, although distinct from preaching elders, yet are as really pastors, bishops, ministers as the preaching elder. I acknowledge that this to me is a paradox; nor do I see how you will illustrate it; except by producing the canons of a certain church, whose exotic head rules over all and yet preaches none; under whom such names of blasphemy as these are frequent; such as pastor of pastors, bishop of bishops; for you know such as wear these titles preach none, but are distinct

from such as do; and yet say they are as really pastors, bishops, &c. if not more so, than the preaching elder. Alas! my dear Friend, I fear your hypothesis is built beside the foundation; you take it for granted, through your whole reasoning, that the different orders mentioned in the text are all pastors, together with a denial of the office of the meer ruling elder altogether, although so evident from the text. But had the apostle intended by these two different words ruling and labouring, to set out different parts of the bishops office, and not different orders, then doubtless he would have said, *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially* because they labour in the word, for then he would have pointed at the different parts of the bishop's office; instead of which, he saith *especially they* that labour, &c. which clearly carries the sense to the distinction of elders themselves.

But again, if pastors only are meant under that phrase, rule well, I think I could prove, were it disputed, that the whole of the pastor's office is included under it; whereas labouring in word and doctrine is but one part, and so the text would read, Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, *especially* they who are faithful in one part only. How shockingly absurd

would this interpretation be! Although you allow from the text, an order of ruling elders, distinct from preaching elders, yet you say this gives no countenance to a body of men called lay elders, that is, men not vested with the pastoral office. I assure you, Sir, I am sorry for your sake, that you will not give your countenance to qualified ruling elders, although not vested with the pastoral office, seeing both scripture and antiquity give theirs. In Acts xxi. elders sit in Presbytery with James and Paul. And in Acts xv. elders sit in synod, as possessed of equal power with apostles in determining disputes. And it is is indisputable that the ancients looked on them as divinely authorized to exercise jurisdictions. Ignatius, the most ancient of all the fathers, who was not only cotemporary with the apostles, but even acquainted with our Lord in the flesh, and was twelve years old at his crucifixion, it is said that our Lord had a peculiar fondness for him, when but a child. It was him that he took up in his arms and blessed, and set in the midst of the apostles, and said, of such is the kingdom of heaven. And in one of his own epistles, he saith that he was in his company after his passion—See Clark's lives of the father. Hear then what this holy man of God saith, when speaking of the power of elders in church courts, "and elders are as the court of God, and the combination

of the apostles of Christ; and a little after he calls them the holy assembly, the counsellors, and assessors of the bishops.

Now, from the testimony of this ancient pastor, three things are evident: 1st, The antiquity of ruling elders; 2dly, That they were distinct from bishops; for, saith he, they were their counsellors; 3dly, That they were equal in jurisdiction; for, says he, they are as the court of God, and combina- of the apostles of Christ. But that ruling and preaching elders are different orders, is further evident by a letter written by Purpurius, dated 103. He directs it thus:—"To the clergy and elders" The ever memorable Cyprian, who flourished in courage for Christ in the most cruel times of persecution, in the year 240, writes thus:—"That he had admitted Aurelus and Celerinus to the Presbytery of his church; and that they were not admitted to preach, but only to read the word publicly; yet were to sit with them in their riper years." And a little after saith, "Know ye, that we have admitted them to the honour of the Presbytery." Here is a testimony of ruling elders distinct from preaching elders, and yet admitted to sit in Presbytery in Cyprian's *own* time. And in another epistle he writes thus:—"To the Presbyters, deacons, and people touching one Numidius, that he should be reckoned as an elder

with the Presbytery of Carthage, and should sit with the clergy to make up the Presbytery;" and this was Cyprian's own Presbytery, for he was bishop of Carthage. And it was as a *ruling elder* that Numidius was to be added to the Presbytery, and not as a preacher; which is plain from what follows: For saith he "And truly when God shall permit, he shall be admitted to a more ample place of his religion; when through the Lord's protection we shall come in person." Now what more ample place can Cyprian intend for Numidius in his church? if he had been admitted to be a preaching Presbyter already, which is the highest ordinary office in the church. Surely this implies that he was taken in only as a ruling elder at first, but was designed for greater promotions. I might now ask, are you still of the same mind, that all this gives no countenance to a body of men called lay elders? that is, men not invested with the pastoral office, when this famous ancient Carthaginian bishop admitted such to an equal power in bearing the keys of government These sat in Presbytery, and yet were distinct from bishops, pastors, ministers, &c. How strange then that you should assert that neither of these orders ought to interfere in the other's department, while Cyprian sits as a common Presbyter with such; and yet rule is not the exclusive department of either, but may be exercised

by both. But why should I expect that the testimony of Ignatius or Cyprian, should produce a change of mind, when apostolic example has so little effect? In Acts 21, elders sit as common Presbyters with James and Paul; and in Acts 15, the appeal from Antioch is made equally to apostles and elders, verse 2; and elders meet on equal footing with apostles to determine, verse 6. No superiority in point of jurisdiction is either supposed, claimed, or exercised. You charge them with arrogantly grasping at the name which God has assigned to pastors, to wit, elder. You say "the tendency of this has been to mislead the English reader, and to make him believe that where he meets the word elder in the new testament, the Presbyterian elder was intended, & not the pastor." I hope, Sir, you do not suppose that Ignatius, Purpurius, and Cyprian, were English readers, or could be mislead by their misuse of the term. Is it possible that these sage fathers, some of whom contemporary with the apostles, could mistake about the apostle's meaning in Acts 15? where it is said that apostles and elders came together, to consider of this matter. Or when it is said in 1 Tim. v. 17. *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour* surely they did not mistake it, when they allowed men of the same order, the same power, and rule with themselves. But what is full to

the purpose, is the testimony of the much famed Ambrose, who lived about 270 years after Christ, he said both the synagouge, and afterwards the church had elders, without whose counsel nothing was done in the church; which thing, by what negligence it grew out of use I know not, unless perhaps, through the teachers slothfulness, or rather haughtiness, while they alone would be thought somewhat. Now, I presume, that this testimony is so plain and full, that you dare not look it in the face, and say "this gives no countenance to a body of men which you call lay elders," that is, men not invested with the pastoral office. Do you think that these elders were as really pastors, bishops, ministers, as Ambrose was; yet there was nothing done in the church without their counsel. Now had you lived in their days, doubtless you would have charged them with usurpation, as you do our elders, for making laws, rules, and regulations, for the congregation. Seeing nothing was done in the church without their counsel; and probably for the same reason, namely, that yourself alone might be thought somewhat.

Agustine, who lived about 240 years after Christ, frequently mentions ruling elders in his epistles. I could mention a number, but shall content myself with one, which he directs thus:—"To the most honourable bre-

theren, the clergy, the elders, and people of the church of Hippo." Now this was his own church, for he was bishop of Hippo; and you may observe that elders are here interposed between clergy and people, as distinct from both. I might here add the testimony of Optatus, of Origin, Tertullian, and others, all testifying, 1st, The antiquity of our ruling elders; 2dly, Their uninterrupted succession down to the rise of Anti-Christ; 3dly, The middle stand that they occupied between bishop and people, and yet distinct from both; 4thly, That they are none of what you call the illegitimate, spurious brood of Geneva; and finally, that they exercised rule and jurisdiction in common with bishops, or if you please, they sat in church courts, equally managing the keys of government in common with them, until they were wrested out of their hands by the introducers of Anti-Christ. And were it not for digressing, I would remind you that there is not a word of the laity in all this, as in possession of the keys.

In your third argument, page 44, you ask, "Is it possible that two orders, so different as that of ministers & elders, should be called in scripture invariably by the same name? Is this like the perspicuity of the bible?" Indeed, Sir, you might have asked this question, and

made this insinuation, and not have been detected, had the scripture been locked up in the Lateran or chained to the pulpit, as in the time of Henry the VIIIth But now when we have the scripture open, and translations fair, this insinuation, that they are called in scripture invariable by the same name, would not pass, even from a pontiff. Pray, Sir, whoever said, or dared to say, that they are called in scripture invariably by the same name? On the contrary, the scripture ever distinguishes them both in name and office. I might only remind you of the text for a full refutation, where the one is styled elders that rule, while the other is termed a labourer in word and doctrine. You may see another instance in Rom. xii. 7. where the pastor, whose official work is to teach, is enjoined to exert himself in teaching; while the ruling elder is commanded to rule with diligence. But seeing you may have precept upon precept, and a threefold cord is not easily broken, I might direct you to 1 Cor. xii. 28. where ruling elders are described by a name, indicative of rule and jurisdiction, and that only; there they are expressly termed governments. Whereas, in the same verse ministers are called teachers. And, by the bye, this very text asserts that God has set them in the church. How daring for you, or any, to attempt to extirpate them out of it. And now, were it not that I fear

it might occasion a blush, I would ask, are you yet of the same mind that ministers, and what you call lay elders, are in scripture called invariably by the same? But, I hope that I may conclude, that your answer will be in the negative. Yet you ask "Is this like the perspicuity of the bible"? Indeed, Sir, I think that the bible is very perspicuous on this subject. But still, taking it for granted that the scripture speaks of these two orders indefinitely. You ask "Is this agreeable to the use of any language on any subject? Is it agreeable to the genuis of the phylosophic language of Greece? where every shade of difference in idea is marked by a different word expressive of it. Sir, I humbly acknowledge that I am unaquainted with the peculiar beauties of any one language above another; yet the text induces me to believe, that your character of the Greek is genuine, for in it the different shades expressive of different orders are drawn to the life; and no wonder, for the limner was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostle. A Hebrew of the Hebrews, born of no main city, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and learned his finest drafts in the third heavens; and not only so, but when he drew the outlines, filled up the spaces, and shaded off the different features of these two different orders in the text, the Holy Ghost

held the pencil. Therefore it would be superfluous for me, even once, to repeat the text or shew (which I easily could) that every difference, both in name and office of these two different orders, are marked with a different word expressive of it.

In page 45, you say, "The English reader, of the most common understanding, must be convinced that it is impossible for the Greek word *presbuteros* to denote two, so widely different officers from the use of our own word elder, though this is the exact translation of the Greek word." Now whether this word *presbuteros* is always found in the original, where we have the word elder in the translation, I know not; one thing I know, that the word elder is not, I think, less than one hundred and eighty eight times named in the scripture. Now try if you can prove the sentiment that pervades your whole reasoning, namely, that the term elder is always exclusively applied to pastors in all this vast number, or that they were all pastors to whom it is applied. But I fear that you will find this task rather arduous; as I can prove that the term elder is applied to orders and officers far more different than pastors, and what you call lay elders. It is twice applied to apostles, thirteen times to believers as such; it is about one hundred times applied to civil magistrates, while it is

but about twenty-one times applied to ordinary church officers in all the new testament. Now if apostles, believers as such, civil magistrates, ordinary pastors, be not orders more different than ministers and ruling elders, I would think it a little strange. Yet you ask "Is it possible that when the new testament writers employ so many words to denote the same office, as bishop, presbyter, shepherd, &c. that they could not afford a distinct name for the office of the lay elder, if it was apostolic." Might I not retort the question here, and ask why but the Holy Ghost afforded a different name to all these different orders, and not have called them all by the same common name elder? And your answer to this I presume will shew, that both are like enough to the perspicuity of the scripture. But more particularly I answer, that the sacred penmen did afford different names, such as they that rule, Rom. xii. governments, 1 Cor. xii. Elders that rule well, 1 Tim. v. 17. Here my dear Sir I hope you will see distinct names from that of pastors, bishops, ministers. You next ask, "What Presbyterian speaks promiscuously of ministers and lay elders by the common name elder, or who would understand him if he did? Yet such undistinguished, undeterminate language they scruple not to put into the mouth of the Holy Ghost. If

ever they use the word elder to denote the minister, they are obliged to prefix the word lay to it, when attributed to the Presbyterian elder to prevent obscurity." Indeed, Sir, I again feel in the most pungent degree, for your inadvertant, but constant mode of substituting phantoms in place of reality, ungrounded, unproven assertions instead of solid argument. Pray where did ever our ecclessiastic, authoritative writings prefix the word lay to the term elder to distinguish the Presbyterian elder from the pastor? or why should we be necessitated to do so? seeing these officers have a distinguished name which the mouth of the Lord their God has named, even a name like the great men of the earth, to wit, *ruling elders.* Or where did ever our church put undistinguished, undeterminate language in the mouth of the Holy Ghost. Nay, but the contrary, he has put distinct characteristic language in our mouth, as has been shewn. Where then is the necessity that we should speak promiscuously of ministers and ruling elders, seeing the scripture has been so specific? But I fear that a blush must be substituted here in place of an answer.

In your next argument, page 45, you say, "Granting that the text does constitute two orders of elders, then there will be three orders in every church, and the Presbyterian

want the third, they have not the deacon." Pray, Sir, what would be the absurdity, admitting there were three orders in every church, seeing the scriptures warrant it. Doubtless before you made your elopement you could have proven there were four. But, be that as it will, where does the scripture restrain us to two? On the contrary, you see that we are able to evince that it warrants three, at least, and then *you* want the third, to wit, the ruling elder. But I doubt it will be difficult still for you to prove your assertion, namely, that Presbyterians want the third. Nor yet do I see how you attempt to do it, either from the divine institution of Presbytery, and her officers in the scripture, or yet from their duplicate, our form of church government. In both which the different officers which the church's head thought necessary for the perfecting of the body are specified, and the deacon taken in, as essential to the perfect organization of the same. Yet for the purpose of supporting your charge, perhaps you may reply, and not without some ground, that you really know some Presbyterian congregations that have not deacons. But I hope you will permit me to ask here, whether you think it is as Presbyterians or as apostates from Presbytery that they live in this neglect; if it should happen to be the latter, then your assertion falls to the ground. For let me tell you, that

Presbyterians as such cannot want deacons, except they be disorganized by persecution or otherwise. You know that the people of God may fall into sin, but it is not as the people of God that they sin, or are prone to it, but as the decendents of fallen Adam. Thus the apostle, when speaking of the power of indwelling sin, and at the same time personifying his renewed part, says, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." So it is no more Presbyterians that live in this neglect, but apostates from it. But as I see little more in your fourth argument, but just a repetition of what you said in page 41, therefore to avoid tautology I refer you back to my illiterate remarks thereon; and so pass on to your fifth argument, page 45, in which you proceed on the same hypothesis, namely, that the scriptures speak undeterminately of ministers and ruling elders; your words are, "If there were two orders of elders, so distinct as that of lay and preaching elders, is it possible that their office and qualifications would be included in the same description." Indeed, Sir, this insinuation, that their office and qualifications are included in the same description will probably be as difficult for you to prove as any of the former. I only refer you to the text, which is so characteristic and expressive of different orders, that the most illiterate, of whom I am one, may judge between

us. There the different orders are distinguished, 1st by their name, 2dly by their work, and 3dly by their reward. But what would be the absurdity admitting that I should even grant your insinuation? Probably I could produce a text that would include both the office and essential qualifications of all superiors, whether in church or state, whether supreme or subordinate, to the world's end; and that in the same description. Now, if this can be done, surely there are orders here supposed far more different than ministers and ruling elders. The text you will find in 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. "He that ruleth over men must be just ruling in the fear of God." Surely, Sir, it would be offering an insult to your reasoning, to suppose that you could suggest, that the king only and exclusively was intended here. The words are, "He that ruleth over men," and that is I presume every one vested with rule. If so, then the king, the peers of the realm, all inferior magistrates, together with ministers and ruling elders, their office and essential qualifications, are all included in the same description; so that, although the thing was impossible with you, yet you see it is possible with God. You go on to tell us, that "the scripture, in describing the office of the elder and his qualifications, takes no notice of two orders, one as requiring different qualifications from the other." My very dear

Friend, when Moses describes the qualifications of a king, Deut. xvii. 15. He says "he must be one whom the Lord thy God will choose, one from among his brethern, not a stranger, &c." Now in this description there is no notice taken of the members of the Sanhedrim, of the elders of Israel, or any inferior magistrate. But dare you deny that they, together with their qualifications, are here included; and yet I acknowledge that all the qualifications that are requisite in a king may not be requisite in a judge of assize; yet all that is requisite in a judge of assize is positively necessary in a king. Thus all the qualifications that are necessary in a bishop may not be requisite in a ruling elder; yet all that is needful in a ruling elder is absolutely necessary in a bishop. You next add, "it is not said that the preaching elder must have such and such qualifications, and do so and so; but the elder which must include every distinction of elders" My dear Sir, how absurd would it be to suppose that the same qulifications are requsite in every distinction of elders that are mentioned in scripture. Is it possible that Heathen magistrates, who are often in scripture termed elders, are included in the same description, or that the same qualifications are requsite in them as in the preaching elder? Moreover, you take care not to say whether it is the scripture or the apocrypha that is defective,

in not being specific about the preaching elders work and qualifications; and I think this was wisdom, inasmuch as, you know, it is not the text that is defective; and yet you intimate as much, although the word elder in the singular is not so much as named in the text; not only so, but the very reverse of your assertion pervades every syllable of it. There the elders, their different orders, and different work are marked as with the point of a diamond. The first is to do so and so, and the second so and so. The first is only to rule in the lowest department; the second moves in a higher sphere, his work is to preach, or if you please, to rule in a more exalted station, which surely requires superior qualifications. Not only so, but the very degrees of exertion and attention that the different orders are to evidence, in the execution of their different offices are also specified. In Rom. xii. 8 the first is enjoined to rule with diligence. The second is, in this text, supposed even to *labour* in word and doctrine. How happy would I be my kind Friend, could I remove the radical mistake you so apparently labour under, namely, that the name elder belongs exclusively to the pastor. You ask, "Is it possible that two orders so different, as ministers and lay elders, should be called in scripture by the same name? Is this like the the perspicuity of the bible?" I hope, Sir, from the few

simple remarks I have dropt on this subject, you will be led to see that the scripture applies the name elder to orders far more different; and not only so, but, I presume, I could produce many instances where one and the same name is applied to orders and offices, characters and persons, as widely different as heaven and hell; I mean the official name angel. This name, I presume, is not less than two hundred and forty three times named in scripture. Sometimes it is applied to the Lord Christ, sometimes to the son of perdition, sometimes to the ministers of the gospel, and again to the inhabitants of the infernal regions, often to the prime ministers of state about the throne above. Now if these are not orders far more different than ministers and ruling elders, let even the enemies of ruling elders themselves be judges. And yet, I presume, you dare not deny but such a mode of expression is like enough the perspicuity of the bible. I shall only detain you with one instance more out of many, to shew that the same name is applied to orders very different, viz. the title rulers. This title, or name, is nearly synonimous with the word elder, and is, I think, about one hundred and forty three times named in scripture; and, were it not to avoid prolixity, I could evince, that it is applied to orders as different as either the word elder or angel.

Alas! my dear friend, I cannot dismiss this subject without taking up a lamentation over you, while with pungent feelings I mourn, and am constrained to tell you, that since the day I heard of your elopement, I might have called you by the name Benoni, or rather say some schabod; for surely, say they, the glory is departed, when one of such strong intellectual powers, such a fertile genius, such matured judgment, should become a dupe to a sentiment so irrational, so unscriptural, as this; that because the scripture, sometimes, applies the general name elder to both pastor and ruling elder, therefore, do you employ all your powers to prove that there is no difference; but take it for granted, that the very name elder is always indicative of the pastor. You even assert, in page 46, that "the words elder and bishop are perfectly interchangeable, constantly applied to the same officers;" and from this you infer, that "if there be an order of lay elders, there must be an order of lay bishops" Indeed, Sir, although I approve not of the term lay elder when applied to church officers; yet, probably, the scripture might evince the propriety of it according to your definition: in page 42, you say "they are men not vested with the pastoral offices." Now magistrates are in scripture often termed elders; if so, they

must be lay elders, for the sacred office appertains not to them. Now seeing that the scriptures shew that there is such an order as lay elders, I call upon you to prove your inference, namely, that "if there be an order of lay elders, there must be an order of lay bishops." I likewise call upon you to try if you can prove your assertion even that the word elder and bishop are perfectly interchangeable, and constantly applied to the same officers. Indeed I fear that your performance of this will be a little tedious. You know that our Lord Christ is an officer of a peculiar kind in and over his church; and he is expressly termed a bishop in Peter ii. 25. but shew me in all the sacred page where he is called an elder, or one instance where the name elder and bishop are interchangeably applied to him. Again, the name elder is not only applied to believing but even to heathen magistrates, and that of the most wretched character, witness, the elders of Midian, Num. xxii. that strove to bribe Balaam to curse Israel. Now where are these termed bishops, or where are the names interchangeably applied to them. Again, the elders of the Canaanitish Gibeonites who beguiled Isreal, Joshua ix. were they bishops, or where is the name elder and bishop interchangeably applied to the elders that betrayed and mocked our Lord, Mat. xxvi. Alas! Alas! for such inadvertance in one from whom it

was so little expected. O! that I could hide you and your performance from the world; I think the obligations I am under to religion should constrain me. I hope, my dear Sir, that I might venture, for a moment, to solace myself with the pleasing idea, that about this time you are willing to renounce your new system; Surely demonstration so plain, with scripture texts so numerous, must have some weight on your thinking mind. But if all should prove abortive, should I for this give over, should I for this lose hopes of my dear Mr. Carson; surely—no this would only convince me that a brother offended, is harder to be won than a strong castle. And that the word of itself is only a dead letter—I shall therefore turn aside into my closet, and speak to Him that can work, and none can let it; that he would "put in his hand by the hole of the door," and then would you and I see eye to eye, in the matters of his glory. Thus under the influence of pleasing expectation, I shall wait the blessful event; and I trust I shall yet see the completion of my hope, even your recantation.

But leaving this, I pass on to your sixth, last, and supposed invincible argument, which you introduce, by informing me, that "the original word 'time,' that is here

translated 'honour,' signifies the honourable maintenance of the ministers of the gospel; (this you say) the apostle proves from the law of Moses respecting the ox imployed in treading out the corn: and the words of Paul that the labourer is worthy of his reward. The argument drawn from this goes directly to prove that all the elders spoken of in the 17 ver. are worthy of honourable support;" and then you ask "do pesbyterians think it their duty to support their elders, or will any one say they are worthy of it; if not, they cannot be the elders of which the apostle speaks," and again ask, "in what manner do the most conscientious of them labour, so as to be worthy of reward?"

Indeed, Sir, I candidly confess that I am totally unacquainted with the original language, and therefore am incapable of objecting aainst your translation; I rather choose, on the credit of your skill to acquiese, and grant you that the word "time," or "honour," intends support. 2dly—I agree that all the elders spoken of in the 17 ver. are worthy of it 3dly—I agree with you in another place, that in this support there is an inequality even specified in the text: but I lament to hear you suggest that both classes of elders spoken of in the text, are all ministers of the gospel, for all such you

know are equal, they have but one superior, and that is Christ; but all they are brethren. And in Canticles i. they are compared to a flock of sheep that are even shorn, but if all the elders, spoken of in the text, be pastors, they are uneven and unequal almost in all things: 1st—they are unequal in their work, the first only rule,* that is all his work; the second both rule and preach. 2dly—they are unequal in their support, the first is to be supported, says the text, but there are an especial support allowed to the second. 3dly—Yourself granted that they are unequal both in talents and exertions, herefore, seeing there is such a disproportion in work, in income, in talents, and exertions, might I not strongly infer a disproportion of office. And how conspicious is it, that this is what subsists between the pastor and ruling elder, for all these things point out

* When I say he only rules, I do not hereby suggest that rule is a diminutive thing, or that there is any office above it; but only that he rules in the lowest department of rule; just as all men from the king to the peasant, are commanded to labour six days of the week, consequently all are labourers? but it is the poor man that works in the vineyard or brick kiln, that is emphatically termed so. Thus when we are speaking of his employment, we say he only labours; that is, he is neither a mechanic, a lawyer, nor a divine; for although these are all labourers, yet the have distinct names, expressive of their advanced office.

the beautiful distinction, between these two orders. Pray Sir, was it not upon your hypothesis that a neighbouring church built her whole structure, namely, an inequality among pastors in work, in income, in talents, and exertions? Alas! that my pious friend should ever lay a single stone in that cursed Jericho, or ever commence an advocate, in one instance, for their human invented hierarchy. You ask "do Presbyterians think it their duty to support their elders, or will any one say that they are worthy of it; if not, they can not be the elders of which the apostle speaks"—here you tacitly affirm that Presbyterians neither do, nor think it their duty to support their elders.—The contrary of which yourself should know, even that they both think it their duty and actually do support their elders, especially when they are called upon to labour with more than ordinary toil and expence about the more public concerns of the church. But supposing that the church's situation was such by persecution; or otherwise, that she was not able to support even her preaching elders are they for this not the ambassadors of Christ? Or supposing that she was not able even now to support her ruling elders, are they for this not the elders of which the apostle speaks? Or if the church in prudence that she be not over burdened, choose no only qualified men but men of

wealth, that are both able and willing to bestow their labour and make no charge, are they for this not the elders of which the apostle speaks? Surely you would not say, that taking support is essential to the office of either preaching or ruling elder. Yet seeing you insinuate this much, probably you would require to be taught the mind of the Lord more perfectly on the subject; therefore I would recommend you to the tuition of Paul as one qualified to instruct you on the subject. In 1 Cor. xii. he asserts that all the evidences of his apostleship were seen among them, and that in any thing they were not inferior to any church, save that he himself was not burdensome to them, but preached to them the gospel of God freely, and then drops the ironical hint forgive me this wrong.

Now should you infer from Paul's kindness that he had thereby lost his apostolic office and authority? Thus while elders labour and make no charge, instead of making this an argument whereby to invalidate their office, might it not be as prudent in you to take the apostle's advice in the other case, and forgive them this wrong? Yet while elders labour without cost or support, Presbyterians nevertheless account them worthy of it. And when you look at the text you will see that this is neither more nor less than what it requires. But as you appear to be

a little dark anent the duty of supporting ruling elders, I hope you will take another walk with me into the field of antiquity, and there try to trace out the "footsteps of the flock" in this particular. And here I will only detain you with one testimony out of many, even that of the ever memorable Cyprian, who in the year 240 writes thus:—"That Arelius and Celerinus were added to his Presbytery, but were not to preach, yet were to sit with him, and to be maintained at the common charge of the church;" and again says, "Know ye that we have designed them to the honour of the Presbytery, that they may be honoured with the same maintenance with the elders, and may divide the measured or monthly dividend by equal quantities; they being to sit with us in their grown and confirmed years, although he may be thought in nothing the less by reason of the increase of his years, who hath made up his age by the dignity of his glory." Here you may see this famous, ancient Carthaginian church not only supporting their ruling elders while fit for action, but even when superannuated. Here you may see not only the antiquity of ruling elders, but 2dly that they were distinct from bishops, for these you see were not admitted to preach; and 3dly that they were vested with power and jurisdiction, for they were admitted to sit in Presbytery; and finally, that they were en-

titled to support. You go on to ask, "Wherein does the most coscientious of them labour so as to be worthy of reward?" Indeed, Sir, although I know none of them that is disposed to boast of how much they do; yet I presume the commendation given them in the text seals their divine warrant for what they do. But as a more direct answer to your question, permit me to inform you of what I know to be fact with respect to their labour, and 1st, their attendance on church courts supreme and subordinate, probably occupies nearly twelve days in the year; and that this is their province I appeal to Acts vi. and Acts xxi. This with the testimony quoted above, I hope is sufficient probation. 2dly, If it is the duty of the sick to send for the elders of the church to pray with and for them, certainly it is their duty to attend, which I know a great number that do at midnight, at cock-crow, and at noon, not permitting their most urgent worldly avocations to prevent them. 3dly, Seeing you allow that it is the province, even of the weakest member of Christ's house, to settle even civil differences between offended brethern rather than go to law; much more does it belong to the elders of Israel to interfere, especially in so far as the disputes are matters of scandal. Thus in settling debates of this kind they labour with indefatigable toil, even to such a degree that

I know one of this order that has spent near four days in this very week on which I write about this very business. 4thly, If it is the duty of bishops instrumentally to sow the seed of the word, surely it is the duty of elders to see that it bear fruit; and this they do by inspecting carefully into the conduct of the people, especially these within their own district, strictly enjoining religion, family, and personal, and, according to their capacity, instructing them in the more plain and necessary doctrines of faith. Now I know many that spend an evening every week in this way. Now that this is no encroachment on the bishop's office, but a rule that has been always followed in the church, even gray-haired antiquity bears ample witness. In the year 596, the famed Isidores directs a letter to the clergy with his charge—"The elders of the people are first to be taught, that by them such as are placed under them may be more especially instructed." From this you may again see not only the antiquity of ruling elders, but a part of their work which is to instruct the ignorant, and likewise that they were distinct from the clergy. Now seeing the church's head impowers and approves of ruling elders labouring in all these four different branches, and that they actually do it, I ask is not this to labour so as to be worthy of reward? If so, and the church account them worthy of it

are they not then the elders of which the apostle speaks. And probably these remarks might answer your last question, "In what respects are Presbyterian elders treaders out of the corn?" From what has been said might I not infer that ruling elders are more honourable than some in higher office, for when they are called by God and the church to their office they cannot be so much as suspected of having lucrative designs? But there are many in higher office who before they receive a call from a congregation, can pretty nearly conjecture what will be their income. And if such were, sure there would be little or none, can I think, that they, (like ruling elders) for sake of doing service to God and the church, would accept of it. Indeed some might suspect many of them would not, "but I hope better things of you, though I thus speak." Finally, if it has been made appear that God hasassigned them their office and work; 2dly, That they have with assiduity and persevering toil essayed it; and 3dly, That God has approven of them in it, saying they rule well; and 4thly, Promised them a reward for it. If so, do you now acquiesce with God, and congratulate them in the enjoyment of their reward. But as a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong castle, who knows but that you might yet rally up all your dispirited forces and refuse acquiescence. Shall I

let such a thought once strike my mind? Surely no. I rather flatter myself that on the contrary you are now rather disposed vehemently to exclaim in the words of Hazael, 2 Kings viii "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing." No, no, seeing the church's head allows them support, and the church says they are worthy of it, I shall no longer oppose, but join in with the blessed pair, adopting the words of Amasa, 1 Chron. xii. "Thine are we O David, and on thy side thou Son of Jesse." Well then if this is the happy issue, I shall hail you with a welcome cheer, in the words of Laban, Gen. xxiv. "Come in thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without."

I hope, Sir, you will pardon my undesigned prolixity on this your last argument. I pass on now to your own explanation of the text, page 47, where you say, "You will endeavour to shew that the text neither proves nor admits a distinction of orders among the elders spoken of. "The opposition" you say "is not between ruling and preaching elders. but in the first part of the verse, between those who discharge the office well in general, and those who are particularly employed and distinguished for toil and labour in that difficult and laborious branch of the office, preaching continaally to large

public assemblies." I assure you, Sir, I not only account myself honoured, but happy so often as I find you and I agreed in judgment. And here we are perfectly in two things; 1st, In this, that the faithful discharge of all the duties of the pastoral office is included in that of ruling well; 2dly, That preaching is but one part. But cannot conjecture how you will account for the Judge of the whole earth doing right if he allows but double honour to a class of bishops that labour in all the different departments of their office, so faithfully as that he himself declares they rule well, and yet allows two-fold honour to another class who labour but in one branch only viz. preaching. Indeed I think the observation which one of the ancients made is very applicable here, which is. "If there be but one kind of church officers intended here, the words 'especially they that labour' do not cause the apostles speech to rise but to fall, not to go forward but backward, for to teach worthily and singularly is more than to teach painfully, for the first noteth all that may be required in a worthy teacher, whereas the latter noteth one virtue only, namely, pains taking." Yet in the same page you assert that "all such elders are worthy of honourable maintenance these who are distinguished in their office have a right to a

double portion, especially those who are peculiarly and usually employed in preaching. This requires peculiar and perhaps rarer talents, much more time, study, and expence, to qualify them for their office, has much more labour and fatigue, incurs more expence by frequent excurtions." Indeed, Sir, I have no objection that all the honour God allows, or the church's ability can admit, be given to Christ's faithful ambassadors; but if all the elders spoken of in the text be pastors, then but one class is said to labour in word and doctrine, while the text tacitly affirm that the other does not; yet both you say are to be supported. Alas! that my pious Friend should be under the influence of such inadvertance. Far be it from me, my dear Mr. Carson, to suppose that either the spirit of God, or yet laborious Paul, would allow honourable support to slothful, lazy, idle preachers, who feed themselves and not the flock. Dumb dogs that cannot bark, sleepy dogs lying down loving to slumber. And such are the first class in the text if they be pastors, seeing they labour not in word and doctrine. But as one well observes if this were the sense of the text to prefer the greater before the less labour in the ministry, then the apostle would have used this form of words—let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those that take upon them

more weighty labour and care; for these words (in word and doctrine) should have been either quite omitted, or inserted immediately after they that rule well; and before the word (especially) to this effect let the elders that rule well and preach the word well be counted worthy of double honour, but especially those who labour much in well ruling and well preaching. Had this been the case your interpretation had been good sense; but if your comment is just, that they who labour most in the ministry should have the greatest support, then would not this introduce endless contention about who laboured most, and who was entitled to the greatest income; and who is it that would undertake to proportion the rewards of each pastor according to his labour? But if this was the apostle's meaning, that income should be proportioned to talents and toil, who is that could evade suspecting the apostle himself for having sinister ends in view? for in talents he outshined the then known world and in toil "he laboured more abundantly than they all." But in opposition to all such notions, permit me to ask, ought not all pastors to be qualified to divide the word of God aright, to give to every one their portion of meat in due season. None a novice but all apt to teach. Again, ought not Christ, and him crucified, to be the

theme of study; and is not this exhibition alike important every where. And in respect of exertions ought not all to travail in birth, as it were till Christ the hope of glory be formed in their respective flocks. To be instant in season and out of season, catching some by guile, saving others, plucking them as brands out of the fire. Now if these qualifications, studies, and exertions are requisite in all at all times and in all places, how comes it that you can assert that one class of pastors requires peculiar and rarer talents, much more time and study, has much more labour and expence. One reason why you allow a double portion to the second class of elders spoken of in the text is, you say, because they are usually employed in preaching. I assure you, Sir I thought every pastor should be usually employed in preaching. But while you assert that the second order are usually employed in preaching, and for this reason allows them a double portion, do you not hereby tacitly affirm that the first order is not usually employed this way. Indulge me then for a moment to express my amazement at the powerful tho' imperceptable force with which the Divine right of the ruling elder's office bursts in you, even while its enemies themselves are judges For while you allow the first order to be elders, and yet such elders as are not usually employed in preaching, who then in

the name of common sense can they be if they are not the Presbyterian elders; for these I allow do not usually preach, and so in this you and I are perfectly agreed, and I assure you were it my mode to produce any human authority to prove this office distinct from the pastor's, I know no modern evidence more pertinent than your testimony above. Another reason why you allow a double portion to this second class is, you say, because of their frequent excursions. But if one should ask who has required this at the hands of ordinary pastors to make frequent excursions from their flock, I fear they would be speechless. That apostles and other extraordinary officers might make frequent excursions none doubts. But pray who gave this inferior order an unlimited commission? That such may be bishops in the Catholic church I admit, but that such are Catholic bishops I deny. Such wandering shepherds as stray away leaving their defenceless flocks to every beast of prey, would do well to try how they will answer that question asked by Jesse's first born at that young Hebrew shepherd, 1 Sam. xvii. "With whom hast thou left these few sheep in the wilderness? Or that in Jer. xiii. "Where is thy flock that was given thee, that beautiful flock." Indeed, Sir, I see no authority in scripture for such wandering

shepherds. On the contrary, it is declared by the apostle Jude, that for wandering stars is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. This is indeed a double portion for frequent excursions, but it is not the double honour promised to elders in the text. Farther, does not the very appellations given to pastors in scripture indisputably evince that every pastor ought to have his settled charge. Hence they are not only termed ambassadors, stewarts, pastors, but watchmen, shepherds, &c. So that the most illiterate peasant, I presume, may easily perceive that the idea of a settled charge, a limited commission, a particular flock, pervades every appellation. But what saith the scriptures? To their authority I appeal, in their decision I rest. 1 Peter v. 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, &c. consequently not a flock in a distant clime. Acts xiv 23. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, &c. Now if frequent excursions had been the apostolic mode, why but all these were ordained at Jerusalem and sent out as itinerants? But on the contrary they were ordained among their respective flocks, over whom they were to preside, and from whom doubtless they had received a call. Acts xx. 28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over whom the Holy Ghost has made you overseers to feed the flock, &c. This text

is, I presume, so full to the purpose, that were I even capaple to illustrate I would account it not only superfluous, but even an insult offered to your reason to attempt it. Now from these few instances out of many that could be produced I hope that you are convinced that every bishop ought to have their own particular flock, and I trust that you are now won to believe that not only the spirit but the very letter of these texts are perfectly antipode to your wandering system. Only let reason opperate for a moment, while I humbly ask what nobleman is it that would not give double stripes instead of double income to any one to whom he had given the oversight and charge of all his demesne, children, and substance, if he found him unfaithful to his trust by making frequent excursions from his charge. Permit me, therefore, my dear Friend, to repeat the text once more with your strange comment, which indeed is not with a view to irritate or hurt your feelings; "Let the elders that rule well, labouring in all the different departments of their office, be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they that wander away from their charge and make frequent excursions from the flocks over whom the Holy Ghost has made them overseers" They deserve a double portion doubtless, this gloss, which I presume is the genuine spirit of your comment when stripped of all

colouring would startle any thinking mind. I hope it will have a sallutary effect upon your own.

Thus, my dear Sir, I have faintly, transiently, and superficially glanced over all your arguments, not with the most remote pretension of ability to overturn them. No, no, far be it from me, the disproportion between us is too great for me to attempt it. I flatter myself, however, that I have quoted you fairly; and if in any instance I have treated you unfriendly, I can assure you it has been through inadvertency and not from design. On the contrary I have even avoided retaliation, notwithstanding my keen attachment to Presbytery. I confess indeed that prolixity and tautology checker every page. but this you know is a native consequence of the illiterate stand I occupy.. Indeed, Sir, the above thoughts are the result of my own meditation, for, I can solemnly assure you that I never consulted mortal on earth about one single argument, sentiment, or sentence, contained in it, nor never bought nor borrowed a book to assist me. I acknowledge upon the whole that were it not that you are under the influence of better principles, with more propriety you might make that taunting remark against my whole structure which Tobiah the Amonite made, Neh. iv. upon the feeble but faithful efforts

of the Jews to repair their demolished ruins, says he, ' even that which they build, if a fox go up he shall even break down their stone wall." Not that I call in question my foundation, or yet my materials, but only my own unskilfulness in architecture. Indeed, Sir I have wondered why your publication has passed unnoticed by the learned, seeing it contains such an open attack upon the goodly government of the house of our God, and militates so strongly against the kingly honour and wisdom of the church's head in instituting the same. Yet who knows but a body of men so eagle eyed and perspicuous as the Synod of Ulster is, might discern that your arguments were inconclusive, your inferences forced, and your whole mode of reasoning illogical. If so might they not conclude, not only that you were below their notice, but that a refutation of the whole was the business of the rustic, or rather a recreation for the peasant. But whatever be their motives for silence, I fear the Lord refuses them the honour of being advocates for his cause, and that for former neglects, namely, for not exercising that authority on you for your backsliding which he hath vested them with. For edification and not for destruction, this, doubtless, they ought to have done by brotherly admonition, rebuke, &c. according as they in their wisdom thought duty. But for neglecting this the Lord treats them now

as Paul did Mark, Acts xv. and probably for the same reason, namely, for former neglects Paul refuses him future privileges; but as I know not the cause of their silence I need not multiply conjectures.

Finally, I only add one humble request, namely, that if you see any thing in the above remarks that would tend to your advantage, you would not despise on account of the incapacity of the author. You know a greater than you, I mean the apostle John, Rev. v. humbly and thankfully received information and instruction from one that only occupied the humble seat of a hearer; and doubtless between these there was a greater disproportion than between us. And you know that even a prophet of the Lord to wit, Elgah dispised not food that was good and wholesome, although his cooks were of a sable colour and of a very diminutive order. From all which I hope you will see it your duty to embrace lovely truth, although in a homely dress. It is a blessing that genuine truth, like natural unaffected beauty. is not much brightened by painting, but of itself has a powerful attracting influence.

Dearly beloved, notwithstanding all that has passed between us on account of your decisive conduct, I would account it highly unfriendly to conclude without hinting how

closely my soul is kint to yours; and that on account of that apparent love to holines, strict discipline, and pure communion which pervades your whole writings, I really think it breathes out much of the language of the heven born soul. What a pity then that we should differ about things of leff importance. Time will come, I hope, when we shall meet where contention will cease, even on the flowery banks of Immanuels land, where we shall exchange the sword for the laurel, and the spear for a well tuned harp, when in concord with anthems we shall join in harmony in sounding forth the praises of him who redeemed us and washed us in his own blood. Now that this may be the happy issue of all our travail, is the sincere desire of him, who with all due respect, remains

Your humble Servant,

Andrew Stevenson.

Finis.